



CEO of Asian Cricket Council Syed Ashrafur Huq (C) speaks while selectors Chetan Chauhan and Mohsin Khan (R) listen during a press conference to declare the Asia squad for the Afro-Asia Cup at a local hotel yesterday.

## Rafique

FROM PAGE 17

out citing a busy international schedule while Ganguly's age went against him.

The selectors, interestingly, had little explanation for Mashrafe's no show in the main side. The leading ODI wicket-taker in 2006, the speedster was instrumental in Bangladesh's fantastic World Cup campaign but he was only considered for the Twenty20 fixture.

The total prize money for the tournament is US dollars 100,000, with the winners of each match getting \$25,000. Man of the Match would get \$5000 while the Man of the Series stands to get \$15,000.

Former India allrounder and World Cup winner Roger Binny has been named coach of the Asia XI while Sultan Rana will be the manager. India's Australian physio-therapist John Gloster will work for both sides.

This will be the second edition of the tournament -- it was first held in 2005 in South Africa. The series was drawn 1-1 with one game being abandoned owing to rain.

## SL wants elected body for cricket

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's sports minister said Friday he wants a new committee elected to run the island's cricket administration, which is currently managed by political appointees.

"I need to hold elections not only for cricket, but all other sports bodies that are currently governed by interim committees," Sports Minister Gamini Lokuge told AFP.

Sri Lanka Cricket is under an interim committee appointed by Lokuge's predecessor, Jeewan Kumaratunga, in March 2005. That was the third time since 1999 that the government had intervened to appoint panels to oversee the cash-rich cricket administration.

Lokuge said that holding an election could take time as there were outstanding issues but he did not elaborate.

"I want to hold elections as soon as it is legally possible to do so," he said.

Sri Lanka Cricket has been embroiled in a complicated legal process ever since former president Tilanga Sumathipala's executive committee filed suit in March 2005 to block an order to dismiss his administration on grounds of mismanagement.

The International Cricket Council in April 2005 recognised the incumbent interim committee headed by businessman Jayantha Dharmadasa as the lawfully appointed body empowered to conduct the affairs of Sri Lanka Cricket.

## Philippoussis in US reality show

AFP, Sydney

Two-time Grand Slam finalist Mark Philippoussis is reportedly set to become the star of a US reality television show as his tennis career continues to hit the skids.

The Las Vegas-based Australian, who has slipped to 138 in the world rankings after a series of injuries, will be the star of a show called "Age of Love", the US celebrity magazine People reported on its website.

The show will feature the 30-year-old dating two groups of women, one aged in their 20s, known as "the kittens", and the other in their 40s, called "the cougars".

Philippoussis, whose off-court exploits have often prompted critics in Australia to accuse him of wasting a talent that once made him world number eight, said he was just "a simple guy who wants a simple girl."

"Age doesn't matter to me -- all the women are beautiful," Philippoussis told People.

"Until now, the oldest woman I've ever gone out with was four years younger than me."

# Aussies in Azlan Shah final

Hockey

PTI, Ipoh

Olympic champions Australia extended their supremacy over Asian Games gold medallists Korea scripting a 6-2 win to enter the final of the 16th Sultan Azlan Shah Cup eight-nation hockey tournament, here today.

It was Australia's fourth consecutive entry into the final of this tournament that they have won as many times and a repeat of last year's World Cup semi-final that the Aussies had won 4-2.

Goals by Desmond Abbot (9th,

69th), Andrew Smith (22nd), Liam Deyoung (37th), Eli Matheson (51st) and Grant Schubert (60th) set up the Aussie victory while Korean replies came from Jeong Yun Sang (11th) and Lee Sung Min (57th).

As the scoreline suggested, the Australians were a far superior side as they played a brilliant tactical game to check the Koreans whose shaky defence on the night was cruelly exposed their ruthless opponents.

Barring the lone penalty corner they conceded, the Australians maintained a vice-like grip on the first-half proceedings that had the Koreans pinned

in their own half.

The Australians were superbly organised in the midfield where they had the Korean schemers under close scrutiny. Consequently, the Koreans could barely make a pass before an Australian was on the ball.

The scoring began in the ninth minute when Abbott swept home a clearance by goalkeeper Lee Myung Ho who had blocked Deyoung's try off a Bevan George free-hit.

The Koreans retaliated and forced a penalty corner against the run of play with Sang finding the net with a powerful drag-flick for the equaliser in the 11th. PTI

# Landis in shock Armstrong claim

Cycling

AFP, Los Angeles

Embattled Tour de France champion Floyd Landis said Thursday that US anti-doping officials offered early in his case to go easy on him if he provided evidence incriminating former champ Lance Armstrong. "That took place in the first conversation between USADA (the US Anti-Doping Agency) and my lawyer," Landis said at a press conference looking ahead to the start of his arbitration hearing on Monday.

"It was offered to me that if I give up something on Lance Armstrong to incriminate him, I would serve the lightest possible suspension," Landis said.

The American, who is battling to keep his 2006 Tour de France title, said he thought the offer showed a cynicism that has affected the entire anti-doping process.

"I do find it to be offensive. And I think it goes to the character of the prosecution," said Landis, who

admitted that in any case he had no information to offer on the subject of doping and Armstrong -- the seven-time winner of the world's most prestigious cycle race who has vehemently denied accusations of doping.

USADA could not immediately be reached for comment. The agency's standard policy is not to comment on open cases.

Landis said he did not expect the subject to arise during his hearing before a three-man panel of the American Arbitration Association, which is expected to last 10 days.

"We would wish the hearing would be about science and about a doping case," he said. "This is what I've been accused of."

Landis and his advisers argue that the French laboratory that found an unusually high level of testosterone in his sample given after the stunning stage 17 triumph that keyed his Tour victory failed to follow proper procedures in handling the samples.

"All I can hope for, really, is that the three arbitrators will listen to the facts in the case," he said.

# Ghaly in hot water

Football

AFP, London

Tottenham boss Martin Jol has made it clear he will come down hard on Hossam Ghaly after the Egypt midfielder threw his shirt at the feet of the manager after being substituted in the club's 1-1 draw with Blackburn.

The draw left Spurs needing a point from their final Premiership match, against Manchester City on Sunday, to secure a spot in next season's UEFA Cup.

But the evening was marred by the Egyptian's angry reaction to being taken off to allow Robbie Keane to come on as Tottenham chased an equaliser.

After throwing his shirt to the ground, Ghaly was jeered by the crowd as he marched straight down the tunnel and left the stadium.

A hefty fine is inevitable and Jol admitted such conduct could not be tolerated. "We always deal with this sort of thing," said the Dutchman.

"We have certain rules and arrangements, whether it is Dimitar Berbatov, Robbie Keane or Jermain Defoe or Hossam Ghaly, it's no different to me so we will deal with that internally."

Ghaly's frustration was perhaps linked to the fact that he had himself only come on as a sub, following a first-half injury to Steed Malbranque. But his antics did not go down well with the home supporters, who chanted "you're not fit to wear the shirt" following his

disappearance down the tunnel.

Jol added: "The fans are entitled to do that. Literally, it was out of character because he is a very good boy, he's always disciplined and every time he was involved he did well but you couldn't say he did well this time."

Blackburn needed a win to keep alive their hopes of a direct route to the UEFA Cup and looked on course for three points when South African Benni McCarthy headed them ahead in the first half with his 17th Premiership goal of the season.

Mark Hughes's side could have doubled the lead after the break when Christopher Samba headed against the crossbar but Spurs dragged themselves back into the game with the help of Keane.

The Ireland captain played Berbatov in and the rebound from the Bulgarian striker's shot left Jermain Defoe with a tap-in for the equaliser.

Jason Roberts was sent off for two injury-time bookings, the first for fouling Didier Zokora and the second for comments to referee Rob Styles, to the bemusement of Blackburn boss Mark Hughes.

"Jason is adamant he never swore at the referee and I thought it was completely ridiculous," said the former Manchester United, Barcelona and Chelsea striker.

Blackburn needed to win to keep their chances of a return to the UEFA Cup via their league placing alive but will now have to go through the Intertoto Cup. "We've applied for it and it was always an option," said Hughes.

## Latics meet Abahani in last friendly

SPORTS REPORTER

The youth side of Oldham Athletic will look forward to end their tour of Bangladesh with a win when they take on Dhaka giants and current B. League joint-leaders Abahani.

The exhibition match, which kicks off at 5pm at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, will be telecast live by satellite channel ATN Bangla.

The Latics, who lost 2-1 to a lively Mohammedan in their opener in Dhaka, drew 1-1 with Bangladesh national under-23 team in Sylhet.

The under-20 side from Manchester have struggled due to heat and humidity but the visitors hoped that the last few days have given the boys huge experience and time to adapt to these conditions ahead of their last game.

## Cork calls for Flintoff captaincy

BBC ONLINE, undated

Andrew Flintoff should be named as England captain if Michael Vaughan is ruled out through injury, says Lancashire teammate Dominic Cork.

Flintoff was stripped of the vice captaincy during the World Cup after a drunken episode involving a pedalo.

But Cork said that decision was taken by Duncan Fletcher and new coach Peter Moores should forgive and forget.

"People ask if it's too much to be an all-rounder? But he's passionate, he wants to captain England," Cork said.

With Vaughan a major doubt for next week's first Test at Lord's because of a broken finger, the issue of who will captain the side remains unresolved, although Andrew Strauss is believed to be favourite to stand in.

But Cork reckons Flintoff has all the necessary skills to make a positive impact in new coach Moores' first match in charge.

"He's a very passionate man and a very proud man, and if they wanted to look for another option as England captain, pick him," Cork told BBC Five Live.

"It is a new regime with Peter Moores and there is a line under everything."

"Let's start again. Let's remember the last time England won a one-day competition was in Australia with Andrew Flintoff in charge."

"Let's draw a line under everybody, let's start again and build for a solid future."

Flintoff captained England during Vaughan's injury absences in India, at the beginning of 2006 in a drawn Test series as well as the 5-0 trouncing in the Ashes series.

Strauss deputised last summer when both Vaughan and Flintoff were out and led England to a 3-0 Test win against Pakistan.

## Vaughan, Pietersen boost for England

CRICINFO.COM

England have received a boost in the build-up to the first Test at Lord's which starts next Thursday (May 17) with the news that Michael Vaughan may recover in time to play.

However, Stuart Broad is unlikely to come into contention for one of the pace bowling slots after being forced out of the Leicestershire's current match against Derbyshire with a knee injury.

Vaughan suffered a broken finger last week when he was struck on the hand in a County Championship match by Hampshire's Stuart Clark. The initial prognosis was that he would need between three and four weeks to recover.

But Martyn Moxon, Yorkshire's director of cricket, told the BBC that Vaughan had "definitely improved since it happened last week."

"I don't know whether they've made a decision or not but he's getting better," Moxon said. "I've not had a chance to speak to him yet today but hopefully we'll know by early next week."

Broad, though, is expected to be out for a couple of weeks. "This is a fresh injury which flared up earlier this week and we have sent him to see a specialist in London," Tim Boon, the Leicestershire coach, told the club website. "At this stage, I anticipate that he will be out for another two games and we are just hoping that it is not even longer."

But there was better news regarding Kevin Pietersen, who missed the current round of county matches with a strain to his left calf. He expects to have fully recovered in time for the Test.

# Sarwan admits Windies 'turmoil'

Cricket

CRICINFO.COM

Ramnaresh Sarwan believes the tour of England is the perfect opportunity for West Indies, who he admitted were "in a bit of a turmoil", to launch a new era.

Speaking for the first time since arriving in the UK, he said it was important for the team to stick together and shake off the tag of indiscipline which dogged them during the World Cup.

"Both teams are under a bit of pressure, after not playing that well in the World Cup," he said. "We'll have to be very careful what we do against England -- but I think they'll be a bit low on confidence as well. They didn't do that well in the Tests in Australia, so this is an opportunity for both teams to revive themselves."

The West Indies board has gone to great lengths to ensure the players maintain their focus on tour. The players were given a handbook of rules and regulations before they left Barbados, including an 11.30pm curfew, which Sarwan is confident will be adhered to.

"When we were playing at home there was speculation about guys being indiscipline," he said. "Those rumours were unfortunate; when you are not playing well people tend to point fingers. I think the board realised there were perhaps one or two things that could be changed to help to take West Indies cricket forward."

"Discipline plays a major part in sport, and sometimes you have to clamp down on that. We never had a curfew before, and that is in place now. I don't think any of us will have a problem with that."

Despite the retirement of Brian Lara, Sarwan remains confident about his team's chances. "Of

course we think we can win this series -- that's why we're here," he said. I want to see us be positive and put in that effort which has probably been lacking in the past. I've can do that I'll be very happy."

He will lean heavily on the likes of Chris Gayle and Shivnarine Chanderpaul who have past experience in England. The squad also includes youngsters Ravi Rampaul, Darren Sammy and Runako Morton and Sarwan remains realistic about what is possible in a short space of time.

"West Indies cricket is in a bit of turmoil, and it is very important for this group of young guys to pull together as a team and move West Indies cricket forward," he said. "It's not going to happen overnight -- it's going to be a long process."

West Indies don't have much time to prepare with just one match, against Somerset starting on Saturday, before the first Test on Thursday.

# Jittery Schalke on the brink

AFP, Berlin



Schalke 04 stand on the brink of being crowned German champions for the first time in 49 years this weekend, but midfielder Hamit Altintop warned

they must focus on clearing the final hurdles.

With just two games left, Schalke will be crowned champions if they win at Borussia Dortmund on Saturday and both rivals VfB Stuttgart and Werder Bremen lose to VfL Bochum and Eintracht Frankfurt respectively.

There is no room for error at the top of the Bundesliga with Schalke topping the table by a point from Stuttgart with Bremen just a point behind them in third.

Some 42,000 tickets have already been sold at Schalke's stadium even though their game is in Dortmund and will be shown on TV screens as the Gelsenkirchen locals wait in expectation of their first title since 1958.

But the climax is likely to go down to the wire and Schalke's final game at home to Arminia Bielefeld on May 19 could well be the decider.

Gelsenkirchen-born Altintop has played in Schalke's last three wins at Dortmund and is ready for another tough game at Borussia's 81,000-seater Westfalenstadion - which is an expected sell-out.

"As a player you sense the euphoria that is surrounding the club. I've heard our ground will be packed to the rafters as well. Hopefully we'll be able to give them a massive present," he said.

"Winning there is a very special experience indeed. A derby victory means a lot to the fans and as a player you feel it."

"Our ultimate goal this year is to win the league and we are two wins away from doing just that. That's what the players are focusing on", explained Altintop.

"Whether we clinch the title in Dortmund or at home against Bielefeld is not so important as long as we win it."

If Schalke win the party will run into next week, but Altintop insists his side are only concerned with picking up six points from their remaining two games and ignoring what happens to Stuttgart or Bremen.

"We're concentrating on ourselves. We have to put our foot down. If we do the rest will sort

itself out," he said.

Schalke have stumbled in recent weeks and if they slip again Stuttgart are waiting, but they have a tough game at Bochum, who have the Bundesliga's top scorer Theofanis Gekas, who has so far notched up 20 goals this season.

But Stuttgart coach Armin Veh came out fighting on Thursday after German Football Federation (DFB) president Theo Zwanziger was reported to have said Schalke deserved to be champions.

"It really irritated me when I read Zwanziger's comments," he said.

"Those comments are totally inappropriate. I had a high opinion of the DFB president, but that has changed now."

Of the top three clubs, Bremen have the easiest game on paper when they host Eintracht Frankfurt.

Bremen's star players Torsten Frings and Miroslav Klose have both pledged their future to the club, but coach Thomas Schaaf is still without injured German international midfielder Tim Borowski and defender Per Mertesacker.

But Schaaf welcomes back midfielders Diego and Frank Baumann who have shaken off slight knocks.

With no chance of a top three finish, fourth-placed Bayern Munich are relegated to the UEFA Cup next season and they are only playing for pride at Energie Cottbus, with a summer shake-up expected at the German giants.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Khalid Hassan, director, regulatory and corporate affairs of Grameenphone, inaugurates the Grameenphone Cup Golf Tournament at Savar Golf Club yesterday. Savar Area Commander and senior vice president of SGC Major General Masud Uddin Chowdhury was present as chief guest. The two-day meet will end today.

# Howard 'jammed'

FROM PAGE 17

Federal Opposition Leader Kevin Rudd backed the Howard government, branding Mugabe's regime "distusting."

Ignoring the issue would only "legitimise what's going on in Zimbabwe," he said.

"It's violent, it's ugly -- this Mugabe regime is disgusting."

Howard said he had raised the issue with Australian captain Ricky Ponting at a welcome home breakfast for the victorious World Cup team last week.

The Zimbabwe tour has become a hot topic in Australia, with church groups urging a boycott.

The nation's 42 Catholic bishops saying such a move would be a significant symbolic gesture against an oppressive regime.

The Catholic aid agency Caritas Australia said that if the government paid the fine, it should insist that the ICC order the money be held in trust for cricket purposes to ensure it did not go to Mugabe's government.

Fast bowling great Dennis Lillee joined the growing chorus of voices

calling on Australia not to tour Zimbabwe.

"You can't endorse a regime like that," Lillee told the West Australian newspaper.

"That is what (the tour) may seem to be doing. It is not a place I would recommend Australia should tour because of the political problems there."

Lillee, the WA Cricket Association president, said he was speaking as a private citizen, and not as a cricket administrator.

"There are obvious grounds not to tour though you have to feel sorry for the Zimbabwean players."

Former Zimbabwe coach and Australian batsman Geoff Marsh questioned the value of an Australian boycott.

"The feeling I get -- and it's the opinion of some of my Zimbabwean mates as well -- is what difference will stopping a cricket tour make?" Marsh told the Sydney Morning Herald.

"Whether it's the right or wrong thing to do is another matter, but, in real terms, I just wonder what it will achieve."

## Jennings

FROM PAGE 17

approached by such and up-and-coming cricket country but I am a South African through and through and this is where my heart is."

Jennings has instead accepted a post at the national cricket academy in Pretoria for two years and the job of coaching the South African Under-19 side. He coached the South African national team from October 2004 to May 2005 and was replaced by current coach Mickey Arthur after there were reports of a rift between Jennings and senior players in the side.

## Ctg Abahani

FROM PAGE 17

point ahead of Chittagong Abahani.

Liberian striker Abraham Bobby struck in the 43rd minute to give the hosts a 1-0 lead while midfielder Khokon Das's third league goal came four minutes after resumption to seal the victory.

It was Chittagong Abahani's third win in the run and second at home while Farashganj's fourth defeat.