

'Woolmer was not strangled'

PTI, Kingston/London

A top British pathologist has concluded that Bob Woolmer was not strangled, a disclosure which has further strengthened the theory that the Pakistan cricket coach died of natural causes during the World Cup.

With the police yet to make a breakthrough in the sensational case, a Jamaican lawmaker has urged the police to explain the basis of their belief that Woolmer had been murdered and prove it beyond doubt to stop what has become a "global embarrassment" for the Caribbean nation.

A report in leading British daily 'The Times' claimed that top British Home Office pathologist Dr Nat Carey has examined Woolmer's post-mortem report, photographs and other materials after which he arrived at the conclusion that the body of the Englishman was not strangled, as claimed by Jamaican Police.

According to Dr Carey, the death was not from asphyxiation due to strangulation.

The original post-mortem claimed Woolmer's broken neck bone strengthened the strangulation case but it was later pointed out that it could well have been a result of Woolmer's fall.

Jamaican newspaper Gleaner claimed the Scotland Yard sleuths, who assisted Jamaican Police in the probe, also believed that Woolmer died of natural cause.

"...The Scotland Yard report specifically said Woolmer died of heart failure, contradicting earlier reports by the investigative arm of the Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) and local pathologist Dr Ere Seshiah, who had conducted a post-mortem on Woolmer's body," it said.

ICC must be modern: FICA

BBC ONLINE, undated

Cricket's governing body has been urged to modernise by leading cricketers who say they have lost confidence in it.

In a survey by the Federation of International Cricketers' Associations (FICA), 56 per cent doubted the International Cricket Council's (ICC) ability to govern the game or organise World Cups.

A staggering 89 per cent of international players rated the recent World Cup in the Caribbean as average or worse.

FICA chief executive Tim May said: "There has been growing dissatisfaction regarding the governance of our game."

He added: "An independent review will determine what is the best and most applicable structure for cricket's international governing body."

"We strongly believe that the present structure...is outdated and not in the best interests of the game."

FICA's World Cup survey showed 64 per cent of players believe the same tournament structure -- four groups of four, followed by Super 8s -- should be retained for the next World Cup.

But 87 per cent felt the competition was too long, with the survey concluding that "The death of Bob Woolmer, the early exit of India and Pakistan, the long and laborious Super 8s, the lack of exciting matches, the rain-affected final, the unfortunate umpire/referee error at the final, and the long periods that players had at their disposal between matches all affected the players' opinion."

May says the ICC should take the blame for the organisational problems and the controversy surrounding Darrell Hair, its anti-doping policy and Zimbabwe.

The governing body appears has acted swiftly on the former Australia star's criticism of its committees, which used to be made up of nominated representatives from each Test-playing country and leading Associate Member countries.

Scalping

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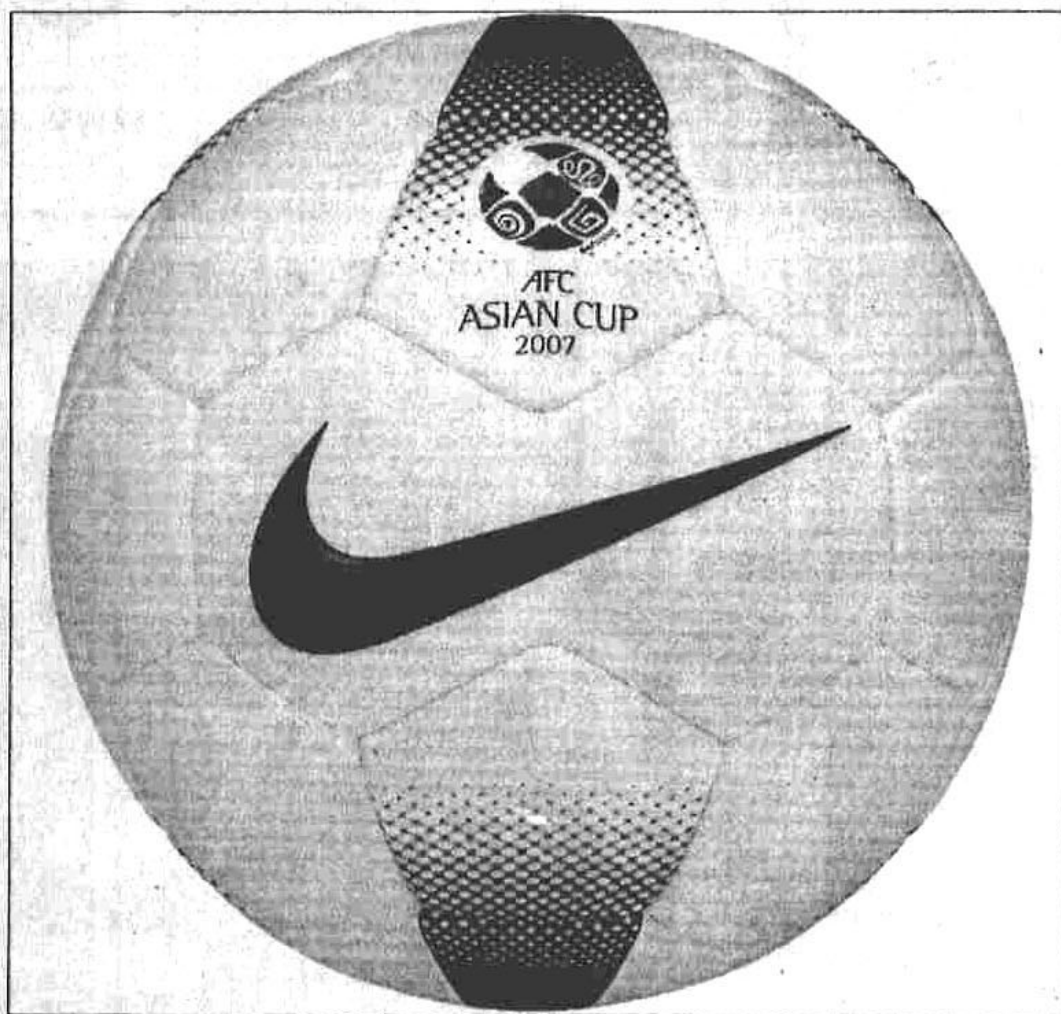
"The order is ridiculously over the top. It means I will never be out of a police station and I'll never have my passport for more than five minutes."

"I don't mind taking my punishment when I've done something, but this is punishing me severely for something I haven't done, and have no intention of doing."

"If they wanted to order me to stay away from the cup final, then fair enough, but why infringe on my life and my family life for three years?"

Roberts has pulled off an extraordinary array of streaks.

They include the last Super Bowl, the Wimbledon men's final, the Tour de France, the UEFA Cup final, the rugby union World Cup final, the French Open, the Ryder Cup, the London Marathon, the Winter Olympics curling event, the World Snooker Championships, the Commonwealth Games, the International Synchronised Swimming Championships, Royal Ascot, the Grand National, Mr Universe, Britain's National Lottery, the Pamplona Running of the Bulls -- and even dog show Crufts.



A picture released on Tuesday by the Asian Football Confederation shows the official match ball for the AFC Asian Cup 2007 which has been launched by Nike, marking the first time ever when a ball has been launched specifically for any football competition in Asia.

Gayle blasts curfew

Cricket

AFP, London

West Indies batsman Chris Gayle believes the curfew imposed on the team during their tour of England is an unnecessary restriction -- but he has said he will obey it all the same.

Following several reports of unprofessional and ill-disciplined conduct by West Indies players during the recent World Cup in the Caribbean, where the side failed to make it to the semi-finals, officials have imposed an 11.30pm (23.00 GMT) curfew on the squad during their four-Test tour of England.

Gayle, one of the senior players in a largely youthful squad, regretted the move although he said he understood it was necessary.

"There's always changes in life and cricket as well," he told reporters at Lord's, where the first Test starts Thursday.

"The curfew, I guess it will keep the guys more on their toes and try to get the best out of the players even more."

"I wouldn't agree with the curfew but it's the team rule, team

policy so you have to go along with it," said the 27-year-old opening batsman, a veteran of 64 Tests.

"If it was in my hands I would have let guys be more free and do what they want to do in the lead up to the first Test match," said the left-hander, who has scored 4,259 Test runs at an average of 38.71 with seven hundreds.

"I'm just speaking for myself, that's my point of view."

Thursday's match will be the first West Indies have played since the retirement of former captain Brian Lara, Test cricket's leading run-scorer, who quit following the World Cup.

There is a new look feel to the squad with Ramnaresh Sarwan the captain and coach David Moore, who succeeded fellow Australian Bennett King after the World Cup, now in charge.

But the weather has so far conspired against the new set up with only 48 overs play possible in the West Indies' drawn warm-up match against Somerset at Taunton, where two of the scheduled three days' play were totally washed out in the tourists' only warm-up game before coming to Lord's.

"We would have liked more practice going into the first game

but rain played a part and there's nothing we can do about that. We'll have to use the indoor facilities and make the best of that," said Gayle, nursing a thumb injury but expected to be fit come Thursday.

"There's a disadvantage towards us but we are professional and we'll just have to go out there, put our best foot forward and play as a team. But a lack of practice has been our downfall so far."

By contrast England fast bowlers Stephen Harmison and Matthew Hoggard, both of whom played leading roles in their side's 3-0 and 4-0 Test series victories against the West Indies in the Caribbean and on home soil when the teams last met in five-day cricket three years ago, have had plenty of overs in the English county championship so far this season.

The duo have every reason to be fresh after missing the World Cup, Harmison retiring from one-day cricket during England's 5-0 Ashes tour thrashing in Australia and Hoggard not selected.

Gayle said: "The likes of Harmison, he's in good form and Hoggard as well. It's going to be very challenging. We are looking forward to it and we're up for it."

But he added he didn't feel under additional pressure. "There's always responsibility on my shoulders, not just as senior player but as a batsman, the top order leading from the front."

Newcastle

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rest but once Freddy opened that door was in."

Roecker left Newcastle earlier this month after a disappointing season which ended with the club in 13th place having registered their lowest Premiership points total, 43.

Allardice stepped down from his position as Bolton boss on April 29 after eight successful years in the cash-strapped Lancashire outfit.

He previously turned down the chance to manage the Magpies three years ago, and last summer he was interviewed for the England job but lost out to Middlesbrough boss Steve McClaren.

Allardice will have several burning issues concerning players to deal with when he starts his job at St James, most notably with England striker Michael Owen whose future at Newcastle has been cast into doubt.

"One of the first things I will be doing is sitting down with Michael Owen and having a little chat with him," he said.

"What I think Michael needs is more time to get on track for us and hopefully he will decide to take that time."

FIFA joins

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power. The Swiss federal court has made a ruling by saying that FIFA and its associations have the right and the power to use all 14 sanctions of the disciplinary code starting with a warning and ending with exclusion of a member via relegation and deduction of points."

In the Rayo Vallecano case, the Spanish club had been threatened with relegation if it did not pay transfer fees owed to a Brazilian club. It claimed, unsuccessfully, that FIFA did not have the power to do so.

BKSP ride on Towhidul treble

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sakhira

Towhidul slammed a hat-trick to help BKSP thrash Tangail 8-0 in their final round match of the Western Union National Youth Football Championship here yesterday.

The winners led the first half 4-0 at the Sakhira Stadium with Towhidul scoring one but the striker completed his treble in the last ten minutes with goals in the 80 and 89 minutes.

Sabbir netted twice while Sabuj, Rabiul and man-of-the-match Manikone each.

Flintoff in doubt for first Test

AFP, London

England all-rounder Andrew Flintoff faces a battle to be fit for the first Test against the West Indies this week following a recurrence of the ankle problems which have dogged his career.

Flintoff felt discomfort in his left ankle, which has been operated on twice in the last three years, while bowling nine overs for Lancashire against Hampshire over the weekend and has been forced to have a scan, the result of which will determine if he is able to play a full part in this week's opening Test.

"We'll probably know more after I've run around and done what I need to do at practice, but I'm hopeful for Thursday," Flintoff said.

"Sometimes when it's the ankle the alarm bells start ringing a little bit, but I'm still hopeful."

"The operation was on the back and on the inside and this is more on the outside. I had a bit of discomfort in the same sort of area in the winter so it's not something completely new."

"I had a couple of twinges in Australia. It's something we have been aware of and something that has niggled away but it did get a bit worse last Friday. I struggled to play through it on Friday and we'll have to wait and see how it settles down, but fingers crossed it will be all right."

It would be a huge frustration for Flintoff if he were unable to take his place in England's line-up for their first match under new coach Peter Moores.

Flintoff's status as one of the world's best all-rounders has come under scrutiny of late. He scored only two half-centuries during the Ashes tour of Australia and has passed 50 only once in his last 28 one-day international innings for England.

It is one of the reasons why the selectors chose Andrew Strauss to lead the side this week in the absence of injured captain Michael Vaughan, although Flintoff stressed: "The captaincy wasn't something I was really thinking about."

Of sopbers

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large smile on his face, he went past the press entourage quite briskly, shaking hands with some. The greatest batsman of our generation has arrived in Bangladesh, it was seen.

CCDM to seek

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CCDM to hold the remaining four rounds after Bangladesh's ongoing home series against India.

It was learned that Sonargora and Biman demanded the same but Mohammedan and DOHS lined up against the idea.

With the CCDM missing its new chairman Gazi Golam Dastagir, who has been arrested by the Joint Forces, the committee is expected to refer the case to the Bangladesh Cricket Board today.

SUPER LEAGUE TABLE

Teams	M	W	L	T	A	Pts
Abahani	12	10	1	1	21	
Mohammedan	12	8	2	1	18	
Sonargaon	12	8	3	1	17	
Victoria	12	8	4	-	16	
Biman	12	7	4	-	15	
Old DOHS	12	5	6	-	11	

Gerrard close

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years Gerrard insists his side craves domestic success which has again escaped them this season.

"We can't escape the fact that, in the league, this season we haven't been good enough," he said.

"You ask the manager, or me, or indeed any of the players in our dressing room and they will all say exactly the same thing."

"We had bigger ambitions for this season than the Champions League. We always had one eye on Europe because it is so prestigious and a tournament that has always served us well, but we also wanted the league flag flying back at Anfield and felt we were in a good position to have a real go."

"The league is always your bread and butter as a Liverpool player and we're not far away," he added.

"With investment in the summer, and the squad here staying together we can promise to push Chelsea and United all the way next year."

Vaughan eyes quick return

Cricket

AFP, London

Michael Vaughan is confident he will be back to lead England in the second Test against the West Indies next week after opting to miss the series opener to ensure he recovers fully from a broken finger.

Vaughan had set his heart on making his first Test appearance since December 2005 at Lord's on Thursday after finally overcoming a string of injuries, mainly to his knee.

A broken middle finger on his right hand put paid to that, although Vaughan admits he was sorely tempted to declare himself ready to play.

"My heart was saying 'just go out and play' -- but my head overruled the heart," the 32-year-old said. "I knew I could probably just about get through a game. But I might have struggled a bit in the field."

"I just thought it might be too big a risk. I was told if I got one more hit on it I could be out for two months."

In the meantime, Vaughan will be part of Team England at Lord's and he makes no apologies for his intended presence, while his stand-in Andrew Strauss is directing affairs on the field.

Vaughan wants to establish a successful working relationship with new coach Peter Moores, himself preparing for his first Test after replacing Duncan Fletcher.

"I'm going to be around this

week," he said. "I know it's a magnificent talking point for many -- but I am the England cricket captain, looking like missing just one game."

"Andrew will take the team out and make the decisions on the pitch, but I have to have a huge say in and around the team because of the fact it's a new regime."

"Peter and I are working together for the first time -- and a week later I hope I'll be back as England captain."

All-rounder Andrew Flintoff meanwhile is facing a battle to be fit for the first Test following a recurrence of the ankle problems which have dogged his career.

Flintoff felt discomfort in his left ankle, which has been operated on twice in the last three years, while bowling nine overs for Lancashire against Hampshire over the weekend and has been forced to have a scan, the result of which will determine if he is able to play a full part at Lord's.

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It is one of the reasons why the selectors chose Strauss to lead the side this week in the absence of Vaughan, although Flintoff stressed: "The captaincy wasn't something I was really thinking about."

"Since I've got back from the West Indies I've been concentrating on getting my game in order and I've had a fantastic opportunity at Lancashire to do that."

"I came back a week last Sunday and from Tuesday I've been back at Old Trafford batting and bowling, managed to have a couple of games and rediscovered my form a little bit."

"The captaincy is something I'd have done if I'd have been asked, but it was not something I was hanging out for."

If Flintoff is unable to bowl at full tilt, England could opt to drop him and pick Owais Shah as a specialist batsman instead.

"I had a couple of twinges in Australia. It's something we have

Bashar

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between the India which they beat in the World Cup and the one they lost to here in Bangladesh, Bashir said: "They played good, planned cricket."

"Fact that we pushed India in these two matches is quite good for our confidence and I think if we can translate that into performance in the Tests, that would be fine for us. But a win in these two games would have done us a world of good," added Bashir. Injury worries remained for the captain as long-serving wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud hurt his hand during a Premier Super League match on Monday. But Bashir assured that he should be fine for the first Test starting at the same venue on Friday.

There was good news as Mohammad Ashraful is expected to join his teammates today.

Malouda

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but they weren't the same clubs (as they are now).

"I have played the game with Lyon, I haven't asked for a departure clause in my contract, but I am expecting a little in return."

The midfielder, who is a regular for Les Bleus under coach Raymond Domenech, has four more years left on his current deal at Lyon.

"I know I have a long contract," he added. "But I might not have the same possibilities next year and OL could make a good financial deal out of it."

Egypt axe

FROM PAGE 20

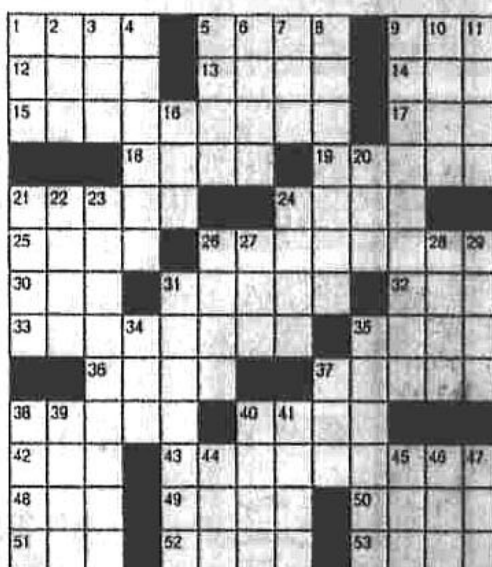
at the halfway stage of the qualifying competition for the 2008 African Nations Cup in Ghana.

Botswana have four points and Burundi and Mauritania three each with only the group winners guaranteed a place among the 16 finalists at the biennial tournament during January and February.

Hosts Egypt overcame Ivory Coast 4-2 on penalties after a 0-0 draw last year to win the African Nations Cup a record fifth time.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	38 Modern-day coin	3 Prohibit	23 Precise
1 Actress	37 Class-	4 Locale	24 Lucrum
Jessica	room	for	26 Raised
5 "Zounds!"	array	shackles	28 Attend
9 "Ulalume"	38 Last	5 Green	27 Have
writer	38 Last	across	across
12 Slender	Greek	6 Present	28 Out of
13 Wedding	letter	7 Perform	control
shower?	40 Mix	8 Woo	29 Dines
14 Felon's	42 Delly	9 Throm	31 Sun-
flight	43 Wading	bird	shade
15 Wara-	48 Unctious	10 Inaugu-	34 Pull
house	49 Unctious	ration	with
carriers	50 Nollon	recitation	effort
17 \$	51 Compass	11 Tube	35 Bel-
dispenser	dir.	trophy	grade's
18 Dryer	52 Sediment	16 Flour-	republic
bulldip	53 Memo	de-	37 Cacoph-
19 Tersely	acronym	20 Mid-	only
cogent	western	st.	38 Look
21 Benefits	DOWN	21 Poker	slyly
24 Hoedown	1 TV alien	22 Top-notch	39 Apollo's
sealing	2 Writer	variety	destination
25 Oodles	Buscaglia	40 Univald	41 Santa's
26 Apes	Solution time: 21 mins.	41 Santa's	sackful
30 Sea	GO DOWN	42 Chart	style
urchin	GO DOWN	43 Check-	cashing
eggs,	GO DOWN	needs	46 Meadow
at a	GO DOWN	47 You	can't
sushi	GO DOWN	stand	having
bar	GO DOWN	one	
31 Strength	GO DOWN		
32 Ostich's	GO DOWN		
kin	GO DOWN		
33 Randered	GO DOWN		
ineffective	GO DOWN		
35 Peril	GO DOWN		



CRYPTOQUIP

W U K "TNHWS ONNP" DEM
VGTG XSNVS UNT RKEFGWSD
OWR UNNP, VOKF ANECP OG
HG AKCCGP? UTMGT FEAX.
Yesterday's Cryptquip: WHEN A BANK
BIGWIG WINS A CHESS TOURNAMENT, I
SUPPOSE HE ISSUES A CASHIER'S CHECKMATE.
Today's Cryptquip Clue: U equals F