

## No kits, no camp!

PTI, Mysore

Fitness of the 14 participants was analysed for the third day today at the ongoing bowlers' camp, being held at the Infosys Campus here.

Trainer Gregory King kept an eye on the medium pacers and spinners as the bowlers went through various drills.

The bowlers have come for the camp without their kit — like bat, gloves and guards — and with no batsmen to bat at the nets, it was unlikely that they would be asked to bowl at the camp, a source said.

It is not known whether the bowlers, including spinner Piyush Chawla (Uttar Pradesh) and fast bowler Pankaj Singh (Rajasthan) would be asked to stay back in Bangalore when the 'batsmen camp' (to be held from June 9 to 12) starts prior to the selection of the team on June 12 for the tour of Ireland and England.

The selected players for the tour would undergo a camp in Bangalore from June 12 to 16.

The ongoing bowlers' camp here, which commenced on Monday will conclude on June 8.

## Guardian exposes

FROM PAGE 21

honest, it affected the morale, it affected the spirit."

The Guardian journalist said, "Was it...?" to which Vaughan replied: "Fred-allo. It's bound to affect team spirit. From then on suddenly you've got players I'd like to see go out and enjoy themselves, but no one would dare go out after that and you don't feel you can create a spirit."

Vaughan had earlier denied that he had used the word "Fredallo" while speaking at Old Trafford where the third Test against West Indies starts on Thursday, adding that he still had a good relationship with Flintoff.

"We are good mates," added Vaughan, who shares an agent with Flintoff. "I have a huge amount of respect for Andrew Flintoff."

England will be without Flintoff for all the series.

England are set to field an unchanged side as they look to go for an unbeatable 2-0 up in the series with one to play.

## Real request

FROM PAGE 24

lives, said Tuesday it would as of midnight "act on all fronts" to campaign for an independent Basque state.

In a statement sent to two Basque newspapers, ETA said it was ending the ceasefire it declared in March 2006 because the Spanish government was persecuting the group and its political base instead of negotiating with it.

Two car bomb attacks near Real's Santiago Bernabeu stadium on May 1, 2002 slightly injured 19 people. The stadium was evacuated several times two seasons ago due to false bomb alerts.

With just two matches left to play in the Spanish premier league, Real are level on points with arch rivals Barcelona at the top of the table.

## Tigers sweat

FROM PAGE 21

He expressed his satisfaction at becoming the assistant coach of Bangladesh team. "All coaches have a desire to establish themselves as the national team coach. I think, I've been given this job as BCB has enough faith on me," he said. "As far as I am concerned, this is not a demotion."

Bangladesh will play the first Test from June 25 at the Premadasa Stadium.

Tigers will return to practice tomorrow after a day's break.

## McClaren hails

FROM PAGE 24

had purpose. We won the ball quickly, we won our challenges, and we had no real problem with them. We had our chances, it really was just a matter of time.

"The first goal is key and once we got that, our confidence grew. I wouldn't say we've turned the corner, but the performances have shown what can do. We need to maintain that, but we've got ourselves back in group."

England remain fourth in Group E, but are now just three points behind joint-leaders Croatia and Israel.

"Looking at the table, it's in our hands," McLaren said. "Four of the last five games are at Wembley."

For Owen, this was a record-breaking night, his 23rd competitive goal for England taking him past the previous best set by Gary Lineker.

"It's obviously nice to score goals and to break that record is fantastic," he said.

"Lineker is an England great. He was my idol when I was a kid. It's lovely to beat him."

Goes, meanwhile, announced he will not renew his contract when it expires in November.

"I have been here seven years," he said. "I had a hard meeting with the president of the federation, Aivar Pohlak, and we decided it was time for me to go."



PHOTO: AFP

England opener Alastair Cook leaves the ball during the first day of the third Test against West Indies at Old Trafford on Thursday.

## Past meets future

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

"First thing is the run-up. Then the pace of the kid. Then whether they have a cricket brain. Then the fitness. Then how hungry he is. With good fast bowlers you spot these qualities within a few overs." So says Wasim Akram of spotting class, and who's to argue? Fortunately for Pakistan, if belatedly, it is what he has been doing over the last couple of weeks.

Not all the 22 bowlers who turned up at the fast bowling camp needed spotting; Shoaib Akhtar, Mohammad Asif and Umar Gul came in for some tuning and fine-tuning. Others, like the U-19 pair of Anwar Ali and Jamshed Ahmed, came because this is as close to a finishing school as you'll find in Pakistan. A finishing school for pace.

This happy communion of pace past, present and the future at Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore, is in effect the ground zero of Pakistan cricket. From here, as always, will sprout success. Here is why Pakistan have won nearly a third of all their Tests and more or less a quarter of Tests away. To the east, fast bowling has laboured, and so too winning — India, for example, have won just over a fifth of all Tests and under 15 per cent away from home.

One of eleven players development programmes over the next six months, this camp marked the National Cricket Academy's return to life. About time too: the academy was made non-functional, like the Chief Justice of Pakistan recently, just a year after it began proper in 2005. That is for another day, but it breathes again.

"We had planned this for some time," says Aaqib Javed, the former Pakistan fast bowler and U-19 coach who is now overseeing the camp and NCA operations. "The bowlers are from three levels: U-19,

A and academy teams, and senior level. If you can identify some talent from the U-19 and academy groups, then you have a potential pool of back-ups, players on whom more attention should be paid."

Thus Akram was called for identification. Random, globe-trotting and informal sessions with struggling Indian bowlers hint at a happy knack for helping youngsters. As one of the most magnificent of his breed ever, he is a choice as coach. Not so apparently.

"It's my first time coaching, officially or unofficially. It's good but it's also something you have to get used to, especially concentrating for so long. I'm getting into it but it takes time when you start," he confesses.

Full-time it won't become — the twin necessary evils of TV and business commitments (he's an investor in a high-end sports store) have seen to that. But he's keen to contribute in his own way. And it's not to say that no one else should, or that a bowling coach isn't needed. Akram sits, in this very modern debate, on the side of the coach.

He didn't have one when he was a lanky, big-haired prospect, though he admits he often felt the need. Still, Ian was there to fall back on, as was Mudassar Nazar, a door-opener but a wily swing bowler. It is a similar wetness behind current fast bowling ears that needs looking after in particular.

"Myself and Waqar would help each other and younger bowlers around us. In this team, only Shoaib is experienced and, because of his injuries, he hasn't been around much. With a young team like this, you need someone around, for advice, for tips." Aaqib is more blunt: "What advantage is gained from not having a coach? Give me just one."

Some expertise somewhere is needed, if for nothing else than to clot the myriad injuries their fast men have suffered in recent years. Both Aaqib and Akram have known hospitals and surgeons well, though only four fast bowlers have played

more Tests than the latter ("None of them were Pakistani either," he is quick to remind).

Akram: "If you are fit you will suffer less, if you aren't, you will (suffer) more. Fast bowlers play with niggles anyway, a little twinge or ache, but you just get on with it. Or at least we did." It is here the academy might play its most critical role. Thankfully, Aaqib is already on the case.

In a remarkably forward-looking piece of planning for Pakistan, I scans have been taken of the knees of all bowlers at the camp. The idea is to do this regularly, to track not only the effects on the knees as bowlers age and actions are tweaked, but also to pre-empt injuries.

If they can manage that, the future is worth visiting. Fast bowling is as Pakistanis as anything in this diverse country. "It is part of the psyche from a young age," offers Aaqib. If it isn't, then tape ball cliches ensure it eventually will be.

If you're inclined to keep track, do so of these men. Mohammad Aamir, a 16-year-old from Rawalpindi is Akram's pick; naturally, he's left-arm. He's played U-19 and an academy place waits. Aaqib approves and adds Sohail Tanveer, another left-arter, who's been around and who is "deceptively quick."

And what would a Pakistan pace camp be without a really speedy prospect? Mohammad Ihsan's star rose, dipped and is now, according to Aaqib, rising again. "He's a much-improved bowler now. He's still got good speed, touches 90 (mph), and has great body language." As do they all.

"I am hugely proud and very excited," Aaqib told BBC Sport. "It is absolutely a dream come true."

"To walk out at such a prestigious ground alongside such fantastic cricketers is an honour."

Former New Zealand all-rounder Chris Cairns and ex-England batsman John Stephenson are among those who will be playing alongside Hassan.

And, with the ringing endorsement of Mike Gatting — who says Hassan has "huge potential" — behind him, the youngster is keen to make an impression.

"I want to show that, regardless of your origins or obstacles that may face you, you can be a success if you put your mind to it."

"I know where I was 12 months ago and I know how lucky I have been to have had advice and guidance from so many brilliant people."

"Now I want to show what I can do. I hope to develop my game, maybe with a second XI county side in the future, and repay the faith shown in me by some brilliant people."

So could his journey end with an appearance at the 2011 World Cup?

"That would be amazing, and Afghan cricket is really on the up," says Hassan.

"There is a lot of hard work going on behind the scenes and the aim is to put ourselves up there alongside Associate teams like Ireland and Bermuda."

"That is the dream and that is what we're working towards."

## Hassan to make Afghan history

BBC ONLINE, undated

Hamid Hassan will become the first Afghan cricketer to turn out for the MCC at Lord's on Thursday — and the 20-year-old admits he cannot wait.

As a young but fast-improving cricketer, Afghanistan are striving to put their massive domestic problems to one side and become a force among the elite.

And Hassan's selection against a Europe XI at the home of cricket is another step forward for a country that hopes to qualify for the 2011 World Cup.

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## PCB still

FROM PAGE 21

Whatmore was out of the race and they had shortlisted South African Graham Ford and England's John Emburey for the job.

The PCB has appointed a three-man selection committee to recommend a shortlist of three coaches to the ad-hoc committee which will discuss the potential candidates at its meeting on June 17.

Pakistan's next assignments are one-day matches against India, Scotland and possibly a World XI match in Scotland in early July and the board sources said the aim was to finalise a contract with a new coach sooner than later.

## Ribery joins

FROM PAGE 24

unveil Italian World Cup winning striker Luca Toni in a deal worth 11 million euros.

Ribery's transfer deal is estimated to be 25 million euros, which would make him the most expensive player in Bayern's history.

Bayern finished fourth in the Bundesliga last season, their worst performance for ten years and have missed out on a place in next season's Champions League for the first time since 1996.

## Klose buries

FROM PAGE 24

But after Germany's 2-1 win in Hamburg on Wednesday — which fired the home side to the top of Group D and five-points clear of rivals the Czech Republic — Klose and Frings both said the matter had been put to bed.

"The press always make a big deal of these things, there is no problem between Torsten and I," said Klose, who looked to have scored Germany's first goal until a replay confirmed the ball came off a Slovakian defender.

## Dada back on top

## Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

The Indian crowd roared in delight at the fall of an Asian. Sanath Jayasuriya, the big-hitting Sri Lankan, had just fallen and he might have been a trifle surprised at the crowd reaction. But he would have understood had he looked at the helmeted figure striding past him towards the middle. The chants of Dada, Dada ringed the arena as Sourav Ganguly walked out.

It could have been Kolkata. Never mind that this was the hometown of the man who replaced him as captain. You might hate him, love him and hate him again but he, unlike most if not all his colleagues, stirs up emotions that you didn't think you were capable of. You cannot maintain a monk-like equanimity with him. After all, he is one of the most fascinating Indian players ever.

The pitch offered good bounce and had live grass — a commodity enjoyed only by bovines and vegetarians in this country and seldom seen on cricket grounds. A couple of

scribes in the press box were licking their lips, itching for the tamasha to begin.

Morne Morkel had the ball and his approach was predictable. Bounce Ganguly out. Embarrass the emperor. The first ball flew at the rib cage. Ganguly shuffled across uneasily, took the bottom-hand off the handle, stabbed at the ball which kissed his gloves on the way to the fine-leg boundary. Morkel sighed. So did the crowd but in relief.

Morkel pitched the next one full, around the off stump. Perhaps Ganguly would be hanging on the back foot, expecting a short ball, and would be a trifle late while driving. Maybe an edge? No luck. Ganguly, who these days stands slightly more erect, kept his head still and the bat in the air, leaning forward fully to caress it through the cover region. The DJ picked up the public vibes and promptly played Main hoon Don, a popular number. The camera panned to Ganguly. The don was smiling.

But Morkel, in the middle of a good spell where he extracted considerable lift, hit the deck short of length the next delivery and made it kick up just outside off. Ganguly tried to push it to backward point and saw it racing away to the third-man boundary.

Three balls, one good shot, and he had 12 on the board. The crowd weren't complaining.

Albie Morkel replaced his younger brother. Pardon me for digressing into vernacular but if this was the Hindi movie Sholay, the dialogue would have gone thus: "Dono Bhai Aaye ho! Kya socha tha? Dada khush hoga, shabaash dega, kyu?" Ganguly had a charge and a miss. Moments later, he carved one past point. A few balls later, Ganguly shuffled inside the line and hooked it away for another four.

In between, he played an impious cut and a delectable straight-drive off Elton Chigumbura. The crowd had forgotten about the harsh sun; paper-fans were being ignored and people began to clap again. Then, against the run of play, Ganguly dragged one on to the stumps