



Did U Know?

Shivnarine Chanderpaul of the West Indies scored 116 not out in the second innings of the third Test against England at Old Trafford on Monday. It was his fifteenth century, third against England.



David Moore

(West Indies cricket coach)
"Chanderpaul is under-estimated and under-rated. He's a world-class cricketer."

Kenya to host last Afro-Asia

AFP, Nairobi

Kenya will host the third and final Afro-Asia Cup series in June 2008, local cricket officials said on Tuesday.

The country was picked to stage the tournament during the just-concluded second edition of the Afro-Asia Cup in India.

"We are honoured and privileged to host the third and last edition in the first and second week of June 2008," Cricket Kenya chairman Samir Inamdar told AFP on arrival from India.

"This is one method of raising the profile of the game in the country."

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Australian batting coach Tooth Brien (L) imparts some tips yesterday to the participants in the Level Two coaching course at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

Wright wants NZ place

CRICINFO, undated

John Wright has confirmed he would like to work with New Zealand Cricket but he expects John Bracewell to keep his job as the national coach. Wright said he would not rule out another overseas posting in future but his immediate plans were in New Zealand.

"I'd like to get involved in New Zealand cricket because it's sort of a bit like unfinished business," Wright told the Herald on Sunday. "I played for New Zealand for a long period of time and I'm pretty passionate about cricket in New Zealand. Cricket is what I've done for my working life really so I'd like to find a role here at some stage and I wouldn't necessarily rule out working overseas again."

The paper reported that Bracewell was likely to be offered a contract extension, possibly for two

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Cricket

AFP, Manchester

England captain Michael Vaughan believes fast bowler Stephen Harmison is on his way to once again becoming a major force in cricket.

The Durham quick, three years ago rated the world's best bowler, endured a poor series during the 5-0 Ashes series debacle in Australia where his first ball wide in the opening Test set the tone for England's largely lacklustre performance in a depressing campaign.

Even more concerning was his waywardness for the first two Tests of the ongoing home series against the West Indies who, unlike Australia, only have one world class batsman in Shivnarine Chanderpaul.

The 28-year-old appeared a bowler transformed in the second innings of England's 60-run second

Mashrafe focuses on SL



Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The Tigers had another rain-interrupted day in training yesterday but there was no shortage of exuberance, especially in presence of the energetic Mashrafe Bin Mortaza at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

The inspirational paceman, also the Bangladeshi vice-captain now, joined the camp yesterday after taking part in the Afro-Asia Cup in India.

Mashrafe had injury worries before the tournament and many were skeptical about the trip but his return home without any damage seems to be a blessing because when fully fit, he means something special to the whole team.

With another Sri Lanka tour around the corner, it is hard to forget that the 23-year-old's last visit to the island two years back ended in a nightmare as he had to return home due to a back pain after just bowling one over in a limited-overs practice match at Moratuwa.

"It's always nice for me to feel

hundred per cent fit. I am really looking forward to this tour after a frustrating visit two years back," responded the 'Narail Express', who has enjoyed almost injury-free times for the last one and half years.

Mashrafe had a little success in the inter-continental cricket tournament but everybody knows how to play cricket Asia and Africa played although all the matches had full one-day international status.

"It was a different feeling to play alongside players from different countries. I enjoyed everything there, especially the presence of Mohammad Yousuf (Pakistani batsman) was fantastic. Yousuf made fun with everything like splitting Dilhara's (Fernando) name with humour. I always love the easy-going people," informed Mashrafe, who, however, was a bit frustrated for being used as a change bowler.

The fun part over, all the Tigers are focused on a difficult task in Sri Lanka but Mashrafe was not ready to be extra-cautious about the 40-day tour where they play three Tests and as many one-day matches. "We lost all the matches in Sri Lanka very badly but I don't want to focus on the previous record. True, it is a tough tour but it is not wise to always think it beforehand. We have to play our natural game. I have no special plan, rather it is just another series for me," said a confident Mashrafe.

"My personal expectation is to take the Test matches to five days. We have the ability to do anything in the one-day game but we are still far behind to think about results in Test cricket," he said adding that 'bowlers can win a Test but the batsmen have to save the match'.

He also believes that the Tigers have improved a lot since their last visit to Sri Lanka. "But we have to prove it by our performance," he observed.

The Narail quick, however, was least bothered with his new role as deputy to Mohammed Ashraful.

"I believe that only performance is accountable in the end. I have full faith on Ashraful but I am ready to support him if needed," he assured.

Mohammad Rafique also returned home with Mashrafe on Monday but the ace left-arm spinner rested for a day.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh vice-captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (R) waits for his turn to bat as Habibul Bashar and Mohammad Sharif (L) take a break during practice at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

BCCI goes to Borde



Cricket

AFP, Mumbai

India's cricket chiefs on Tuesday appointed former player Chandu Borde the manager-cum-coach of the national team for the upcoming tours of Ireland, Scotland and England.

The veteran, who turns 73 next month, was given charge of Rahul Dravid's side a day after South African Graham Ford turned down India's offer to coach the team.

Borde, a top order batsman and widely respected as a shrewd thinker of the game, played the last of his 55 Tests in 1969 and captained India in one match.

He later served as chief selector from 1999-2002, but was currently leading a retired life at his home in the western city of Pune.

Borde will manage the Indian team for the five one-dayers against Ireland, South Africa and Pakistan in Belfast and Glasgow between June 23 and July 3 and the subsequent

full tour of England. Bowling coach Venkatesh Prasad and fielding coach Robin Singh during the three-month tour will assist him.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) will continue their search for a full time coach after Ford's refusal to take up the 300,000-dollar a year job.

"Borde will manage the team in England as we look for a coach," said BCCI secretary Niranjan Shah after a board meeting here.

Ford, a former South African coach, said on Monday he preferred to continue as director of cricket with English county Kent after being offered the India job on Saturday.

India are seeking a permanent coach to succeed former Australian captain Greg Chappell, who quit in April after India's first round exit from the World Cup.

Former captain-turned-commentator Ravi Shastri, who served as interim coach for last month's tour of Bangladesh, declined to continue citing media commitments.

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The BCCI's apparently ham-fisted search for a coach has drawn flak from the sport's leading website Cricinfo.

'Woolmer died of natural causes'

AFP, Montego Bay

Former Pakistani cricket coach Bob Woolmer was not murdered but died of natural causes, Jamaican police said Tuesday.

Jamaica Constabulary Force commissioner Lucius Thomas also ruled out match-fixing in relation to Woolmer's death during the World Cup tournament in the Caribbean.

Foreign pathologists "concur with the view that Mr Woolmer died of natural causes" while in further toxicology tests, "no substance was found to indicate that Bob Woolmer was poisoned," he said.

"The JCF accepts these findings and has now closed its investigation into the death of Mr Bob Woolmer," Thomas told a news conference.

Commenting on allegations of match-fixing, he added that "neither the ICC (International Cricket Council) nor the JCF have found any evidence of any impropriety by players, match officials nor management during the investigation of Mr Bob Woolmer's death."

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LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Chief Adviser Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed will distribute the National Sports Award-2006 among 10 sports personalities and organisers at a function at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium here on June 21.

The nominees are Mohammad Hasnuzzaman Babu and Khandaker Wasim Iqbal (football), Mohammad Rafique (cricket), Begum Sharmin Akther (shooting), Mohammad Ehetesham Sultan (hockey), Fouzia Huda (athletics), Mahmuda Sharif (swimming), Azad Abul Kalam (body-building and weightlifting), Nayana Chowdhury (Judo) and Lt Col MA Hamid (organiser).

The National Sports Award that carries medal, cash and citation was introduced in 1976. So far 158 personalities have received the award since 1976 to 2005.

RATING CHESS
Three players joined International Masters Abdullah Al Rakib and Enamul Hossain Rajib atop the table in the premier group of Destiny International Rating chess tournament yesterday after three rounds.

Previous round's joint leaders Rakib and Rajib drew their board at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall room to finish on 2.5 points.

Also on 2.5 points are Grand Master Ziaur Rahman, FIDE Master Nasir Ahmed and Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar.

Zia beat Delwar Hossain; Nasir defeated Debaraj Chatterjee while Sagar outplayed Enayet Hossain.

In the primary group, 12 players shared the lead with maximum three points.

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Sehwag left out



Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Virender Sehwag, Harbhajan Singh and Munaf Patel have been left out of both India's Test and one-day teams for the tour to Ireland and England, starting later this month.

Irfan Pathan also misses out, with inexperienced faces like Ishant Sharma and Ranadeb Bose bolstering a pace attack that will be spearheaded by Zaheer Khan and Sreesanth.

Sachin Tendulkar, named

Dravid's deputy for the series in England, and Sourav Ganguly have returned to the one-day side while

retaining their spot in Tests, while

Bose is the only new face in both the

squads. Gautam Gambhir also

makes both teams, and will most

likely be back-up to the current

opening pair of Wasim Jaffer and

Dinesh Karthik in the Tests.

Mahendra Singh Dhoni was

picked as the one-day vice-captain,

and the need for one-day

revitalisation sees the inclusion of

Mumbai's Rohit Sharma and Piyush

Chawla, so impressive on the recent

tour of Bangladesh.

With Ramesh Powar having

acquitted himself well in the same

series, there's no way back for

Harbhajan Singh, while Munaf

Patel's lack of fitness has gone

against him. And despite the reme-

dial work that he put in at the bowlers' camp in Mysore, Pathan too

remains on the sidelines.

The big omission though is undoubtedly Sehwag, who had shown signs of returning to form during the recently concluded Afro-Asia Cup. It was in England in 2002 that Sehwag was asked to move up the order and open, and the move paid rich dividends with scores of 84 at Lord's and 106 at Trent Bridge. For a man who was vice-captain at the start of the South Africa tour last year, this is a huge setback.

Neither Bose nor Sharma are especially quick, but Bose's ability to move the ball and Sharma's

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Pace the new game



Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

India has always been considered cricket's land of slow bowlers, men with supple wrists dedicated to the beguiling and mysterious art of spin.

But there's a change in the air and it's coming at express pace as more and more youngsters are turning to fast bowling to make their names.

Recent years have witnessed a pace boom in India, with Zaheer Khan, Munaf Patel, Irfan Pathan, Rudra Pratap Singh, Vikram Rajiv Singh, Ishant Sharma, Ashish Nehra and Laxmipathy Balaji all playing key roles.

Indian fast bowling coaches believe the number is bound to increase with each year.

"We have 8-10 fast bowlers who can fight for four places in the Indian

side, which was not the case a couple of years ago," TA Sekhar, a coach at Australian speed bowling legend Dennis Lillee's MRF pace academy in Chennai, told AFP.

"Talent is there in the country. We will have to be patient to get the desired results."

Time was when India relied on spinners to win matches at home and away, with the famous quartet of Bhagwat Chandrasekhar, Bishan Bedi, Erappalli Prasanna and Srinivas Venkataraghavan calling with distinction in the 1990s before the latest crop of fast bowlers took over.

The phenomenon is nothing short of a surprise because unhelpful Indian conditions have always discouraged pacemen who have to struggle on low, slow pitches.

"Cricket is a batsman's game."

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