

3 fight to fill Marvan void

AFP, Colombo

Three Sri Lankan batsmen are competing for the void created by the self-imposed absence of former captain and opening batsman Marvan Atapattu for the series against Bangladesh.

Thilan Samaraweera, Jehan Mubarak and Michael Vandort were all picked to represent the Sri Lanka A team here Tuesday in the three-day tour match with the visitors starting on Wednesday.

The 31-year-old Samaraweera who captains the A team averages 41 in Tests with five centuries. Mubarak, a 26-year-old left-handed opener, has been named vice captain and fellow left-hander Vandort has averaged 51 in six Tests.

All three were discarded after last summer's tour of England and a good showing in the three-day game should open up the chance for one of them to complete the squad of 15 named for the three Tests starting next week.

Sri Lanka skipper Mahela Jayawardene said he was disappointed by Atapattu's decision to opt out of the series. But it would open up a chance for a younger player to make an impression.

The first of the three Tests starts on June 25. Sri Lanka have so far made a clean sweep winning all seven Tests played between the two countries previously.

Butt named vice-captain

CRICINFO, undated

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has appointed Salman Butt as Pakistan's vice-captain until December. The decision was taken by the board's ad-hoc committee meeting and Butt thus replaces Mohammad Asif, who was named Shoaib Malik's deputy for the recent Abu Dhabi series against Sri Lanka.

Butt, 22, made his Test debut against Bangladesh in 2003 but has only featured in 13 Tests since, due to a combination of his own inconsistency and that of the selection committee. He was not part of Pakistan's dismal World Cup performance but was brought back to partner Imran Nazir at the top of the order in Abu Dhabi. His first outing as vice-captain will be in Edinburgh against Scotland followed by an ODI against India at Glasgow.

Meanwhile, Nasim Ashraf, chairman PCB, said that a central contracts structure has also been approved. Central contracts will come in three categories, as before, but will now give greater consideration to performance in the last year (40%) and also take into account aspects such as fitness (20%), discipline (20%) and seniority (20%), categories for the central contracts that are to be issued shortly. Three slabs remain in the monthly retainer: a category A contract amounts to Rs3 million, category B to Rs2.5 million and category C will be Rs1.8 million annually.

There are also increases in match fees for ODIs with greater incentives also on offer, though the fees will be the same for all players. The contracts, Ashraf added, will be based on performances as judged by the ICC player rankings. The board is aiming to award all central contracts by July 1.

Mohammedans

FROM PAGE 17
Muktijoddha traveling to the port city to play Chittagong Abahani.

Abahani face bottom-table Rahmatganj and Sheikh Russel as well against another improving side Farashganj.

FIXTURES

June 20: Mohammedan v Ctg Mohammedan (BNS)

June 21: Brothers v Arambagh (BNS)

June 22: Chittagong Abahani v Muktijoddha (MA Aziz Stadium, Chittagong); Farashganj v Russel (BNS)

June 23: Rahmatganj v Abahani (BNS).

United step up

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Sampdoria sit down to discuss his ownership rights which will occur by the end of this week.

Sampdoria director general Beppe Marotta has already noted that they will only consider selling him should they receive an "extraordinary" offer.

The former Ascoli and Torino man is also a confirmed transfer target for Roma -- even if they don't seem to have the funds required for such a swoop.

Juventus snap

FROM PAGE 20
competitive squad on our return to Serie A."

Born in November 1979, Iaquina arrives after his development at the Stadio Friuli. He has also enjoyed spells at Padova and Castel di Sangro.

Juventus are also reportedly close to signing Empoli midfielder Sergio Almiron and Gabriel Milito from Real Zaragoza.

Panesar enchants Kartik



INTERNET, undated

He loves the recognition he gets in a foreign land. Yet, Murali Kartik longs for adulation back home, coming as he does from the land of spinners. His foray with Middlesex county -- he bagged 25 wickets in eight matches under cold, seaming conditions -- has been successful this season. But more than Kartik, it's someone else who has kept the English audience spellbound: Monty Panesar.

And Kartik, too, is in awe of the recent phenomenon in English cricket. "Oh, he's the crowd's darling. They simply love him here. Monty is a cute, fidgety, happy character. He's got big eyes, wears the turban in a different way; he's got his own style and, of course, Monty's theatrics and antics on the field are very popular," he tells The Indian Express over phone.

Panesar was almost charged under ICC Code of Conduct for excessive appealing in the third Test, but has received vehement support from England coach Peter Moores who attributed his appealing to the pressure situation and his enthusiasm while bowling.

And even Panesar himself later

admitted he gets "a little too carried away when I'm out there."

Kartik says: "Everybody knows he's a big bunny with the bat and is no great fielder either. So whenever he dives to make a save or smash a few runs, they love him even more. With the ball, he's been great. Monty



MURALI KARTIK

is picking wickets and winning Test matches for them. England haven't seen a spinner who's won them matches in recent times and more over he's a great entertainer."

India's bane in recent times has been left-arm spinners. Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar and the middle-order in general have strug-

gled to negotiate it; last time around Ashley Giles tied them down with a outside the leg-stump line; Monty is the new threat as the West Indies team at present, and previously Australia, would vouch.

"Monty has got a classical action and he spins the ball well," observes Kartik. "But he needs to vary his pace a little bit to bring in more variation."

Monty has, on previous occasions, tried to get in touch with the 30-year-old Indian to clarify certain technical aspects. And he's kept the interactions even now.

"Yes we have been talking a lot, during the last Test match (at Old Trafford), Monty had come and spoken and a lot of those talks obviously centered around spin bowling. John Emburey, Director Cricket at Middlesex, also helped."

And did Emburey speak to Kartik prior to leaving for interview as coach to the Indian team? "No, nothing in particular. He was called in suddenly and he left in a hurry."

Asked whether Panesar would be a real threat to the Indians, Kartik evaded a direct answer. He, however, said that Panesar was a much-improved bowler now.

Asif for World shooting meet

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh's Commonwealth Games gold medalist shooter Asif Hossain Khan will take part in the World Shooting Competition in Germany.

Asif, who was on a long-term training in China, made the trip to Germany in a bid to increase his Maximum Qualifying Score (MQS).

Asif, also an SA Games gold medalist, will have a chance to qualify for the next Olympic Games in Beijing if he avails a MQS of 590, informed Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) chief operating officer M Wai Ullah yesterday.

Meanwhile, national athletes Mahfuzur Rahman Mithu and Sumita Rani Das, who have been receiving higher training in Malaysia from last March, went to Italy to take part in an athletics meet. They will also attend short-term training in Italy.

5 new sport fed bosses

SPORTS REPORTER

The Youth and Sports Ministry yesterday appointed new presidents of five sport federations.

Establishment secretary Abdus Salam Khan has been named president of Bangladesh Chess Federation, one of the most active federations in the country.

The other new federation chiefs are Labour and Employment secretary Mohammed Ashfaq Hamid (wrestling), Post and Telecommunication acting secretary Sheikh Khurshid Alam (carom), DG of DGFI Maj Gen Golam Mohammed (judo) and GOC of Ninth Infantry Division Maj Gen Mohammed Ashab Uddin (shooting).

Earlier, the government relieved Bangladesh Chess Federation president M Rafiqul Islam, Judo Federation boss Maj Gen M Akbar Akter and National Shooting Federation chief M Lutfar Rahman Talukder following their retirement.

Jafar Ahmed Chowdhury and ABM Abdul Hque Chowdhury, ex-presidents of wrestling and carom federations respectively, quit their posts.

Prize distribution

UNB, Dhaka

The prize distribution ceremony of the Destiny International Rating Chess Tournament-2007 was held at the National Sports Council (NSC) conference room yesterday.

Additional Secretary of Youth and Sports Dr Golam Mostafa Talukder distributed prizes among the winners.

Bangladesh Chess Federation's outgoing president Rafiqul Islam presided over the function while Destiny Group chairman and Editor of Dainik Destiny Mohammad Rafiqul Amin was present as special guest.

Premier Group champion IM Enamul Hossain Rajib received Tk 17,000 while runner-up IM Abdullah Al Rakib and the third placed GM Ziaur Rahman collected Tk 9,000 each.

Primary Group winner Kazi Taherul Islam received Tk 10,000 and runner-up Anisuzzaman Jewel Tk 7,000.

Harmy to have hernia surgery

AFP, Chester-Le-Street

England fast bowler Stephen Harmison is to undergo surgery for a "non-serious hernia" operation, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) announced Tuesday.

However, an ECB spokesman said the timing of the operation had still to be decided and stressed Harmison's ability to bowl was not being affected.

Harmison took the field Tuesday for the last day of the fourth and final Test against the West Indies at his Durham home ground here at the Riverside.

The spokesman said a decision on his availability for Durham's one-day Friends Provident Trophy semifinal against Essex here Wednesday would be made at the end of the Test match.

"Stephen Harmison has a non-serious hernia that will require surgery at some stage. It is not currently affecting his bowling and the timing of surgery will be decided by the ECB medical team," the spokesman said.

Harmison, 28, retired from one-day international cricket during England's Ashes tour of Australia and so wouldn't have been available in any event for the two upcoming Twenty20 matches and three one-dayers against the West Indies.

Carlos excites

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until the end of his contract.

During his tenure with Real, Roberto Carlos won three Champions League titles (1998, 2000 and 2002) and three Spanish league titles (1997, 2001 and 2003).

Fenerbahce crowned their centenary year this season with their 17th league title, but departed early from the Champions League.

M upsets another M



CRICINFO, undated

Mahela Jayawardene expressed disappointment that Marvan Atapattu had decided to opt out of the upcoming three-Test series against Bangladesh starting on June 25 at the SSC.

"I just got to know over the weekend about Marvan's opting out of the series. I am disappointed because it would have been great to have him around. The experience that he brings to the team would be immense," Jayawardene told a press gathering held to welcome the Bangladesh cricket team at Hotel Taj Samudra on Monday.

"Marvan's absence definitely opens doors for new players. Hopefully they will grab it. That's how I see it. We've already have a couple of young guys in the squad and we were thinking in the lines of giving them some exposure. I haven't still sat with the selectors and finalized what the outcome would be after the news we've heard from Marvan. All of us have to take responsibility and look forward to the series," said Jayawardene.

Atapattu announced over the weekend that he was unavailable for the Test series citing personal reasons.

When it was pointed out that two

other experienced cricketers Chaminda Vaas and Muttiah Muralitharan would not be playing in the one-day series, Jayawardene stated: "We have to manage these players in the long term. Four years down the line we never know what will happen. We need to give opportunities to other cricketers to get the exposure and give them the experience."

"Those were the lines that we've been thinking when we selected the sides. Vaasy and Murali have been playing a lot of cricket especially in the counties. If we could give them a break in between it would be ideal because after September onwards we've got a lot of cricket ahead of us. We need to make sure we manage them properly," he said.

On the opposition they will be encountering Jayawardene said that Sri Lanka would not take anything lightly. "Bangladesh has made a lot of strides forward from the time they were last here. The more exposure you get in international cricket the players mature. We know how good Bangladesh are.

We knew how good they were in the World Cup. They were in our group and we knew how dangerous they could be. We had to play a really good game to beat them in Trinidad," said Jayawardene.

"There are a lot of our guys who want to prove a point. Test cricket for us is all about pride. Personally, for

me that's the ultimate challenge or for any cricketer. We are simply looking forward to this series. We haven't played in Sri Lanka for almost one year and we are keen to go out and play good cricket and have the fans behind us," he said.

Trevor Penney who has taken over the role as coach of the Sri Lanka team after the departure of Tom Moody said the strategy for the series would be very much the same as it has been in the last few years. Penney hoped that the new coach who would take charge of the team would not interfere with it too much.

"The two years Tom and I had dealt with the side we leave a bit of a legacy to go forward. I hope the new coach who comes in doesn't try and change too much of what we've done with the side. We have made them a real team unit who believe in themselves and playing for each other," said Penney who would also be leaving to join Moody in Western Australia at the end of the series.

Sri Lanka Cricket on Friday signed another Australian Trevor Bayliss as the new coach to succeed Moody. Bayliss is expected to officially take over the national team from the first week of September.

Nielsen to leave Tait alone



CRICINFO, undated

Tim Nielsen has ruled out tinkering with Shaun Tait's bowling action despite the fact Tait was forced to have surgery on his right elbow on Tuesday.

However, Nielsen conceded his biggest challenge in taking over as Australia's coach would be to keep his players fit during an action-packed 18 months.

Speaking at his first official engagement since replacing John Buchanan, the straight-talking Nielsen offered no Buchanan-esque cryptic responses and summarised his vision for a fit, determined squad with strong leadership from the senior players. He was brief and to the point, which seemed entirely appropriate for a man guiding his side through more than 20 Tests in the 2008 calendar year.

"Without a doubt in professional sport that is the biggest challenge -- to play at the highest level all the time, at great intensity," Nielsen said. "Technically what (Tait) does so well is bowl fast. We don't want to change that -- we've just got to try and work with him to make sure he does minimise his injury risk."

Tait's latest setback has given him a 50-50 chance of playing in the Twenty20 World Championship in September. He has already had shoulder surgery that kept him out of the Super Series in 2005, a back injury last April that stopped him

touring Bangladesh, and a hamstring complaint in December, which delayed his ODI debut.

Nielsen said reworking Tait's delivery style would be unlikely to help the bowler or the team. "It's just the volume of work that these young blokes need to adjust to," he said. Nielsen's "young blokes" will play a significant role in Australia's attack from 2007-08. Tait, Ben Hilfenhaus, Mitchell Johnson, Cullen Bailey and Dan Cullen are all contracted by Cricket Australia but none has had an extended run in the team.

For some, that could change as of the Twenty20 World Championship in South Africa, although Nielsen expects few deviations from the group that won the World Cup. "There's young guys like Tait and Johnson who haven't played a lot of one-day cricket," Nielsen said. "And even Michael Clarke got opportunities batting at No. 4, which means that although he's been around for a while he's now got a new role. So it's a bit of a new-look side anyway -- I don't think they'll need to make drastic changes."

There are guaranteed to be at least three positions on offer when the Test season starts in November, after Shane Warne, Glenn McGrath and Justin Langer retired together. Fresh faces are lining up for the opening and fast-bowling vacancies but Nielsen wants the spin responsibilities in more experienced hands.

"(Bailey and Cullen) probably need a bit more time to develop and that's where we hope (Stuart)

MacGill can play a massive role for us," Nielsen said. "He can play for however long he wants and fill those shoes until the young fellows develop enough."

Nielsen was speaking at the Melbourne launch of Cricket Australia's ticketing program for 2007-08, which will again feature a priority-buying period for Australian Cricket Family (ACF) members. James Sutherland, CA's CEO, said he was not expecting similar problems to last year, when the demand for Ashes seats was so intense that many ACF members missed out.

"Being a member of the Australian Cricket Family is no absolute guarantee of getting tickets but what it does is it puts you in that priority window when tickets first go on sale to get first crack at it," he said. Sutherland believes that with a record 50 days of international cricket in 2007-08, most fans are unlikely to be disappointed.

Sri Lanka and India will tour Australia for Test and ODI matches next season, while New Zealand will also make a brief visit for a limited-overs series. Fans have until June 24 to register as an ACF member on the CA website and they can buy tickets from July 2. Remaining seats will then go on sale to the general public from August 1.

England almost there

FROM PAGE 17
added 86 for the fifth wicket in a total of 287.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea on the fifth and final day of the fourth Test between England and the West Indies at Riverside on Tuesday:
WEST INDIES: First innings 287 (Chanderpaul 136 not out; England 5-88)
ENGLAND: First innings 400 (Collingwood 128, Strauss 77, Prior 62; Edwards 5-112, Powell 3-89)
WEST INDIES: Second innings (overnight: 83-3)
Gayle c Prior b Hoggard 52

Smith lbw b Hoggard 0
Ganga c Prior b Hoggard 6
Morton b Panesar 7
Chanderpaul b Panesar 70
Bravo c Sidebottom b Panesar 43
Samuels c Collingwood b Panesar 2
Ramdin b Panesar 4
Powell c Vaughan b Harmison 4
Edwards b Harmison 0
Collmure not out 16
Extras: (b-11, lb-12, w-2, nb-3) 18
Total: (all out in 64 overs) 222
Fall of wickets: 1-7, 2-15, 3-38, 4-94, 5-162, 6-169, 7-175, 8-188, 9-194
Bowler O M R W
Sidebottom 15 4 40 0
Hoggard 11 4 28 3

Harmison 20 2 92 2
Panesar 16 2 46 5
Pietersen 2 0 3 0
ENGLAND: Second innings
Strauss not out 10
Cook c Bravo b Powell 7
Vaughan not out 5
Extras: (nb-2) 2
Total: (For 1 wkt in 5 overs) 24
Fall of wickets: 1-16
To bat: Pietersen, Collingwood, Bell, Prior, Harmison, Hoggard, Sidebottom, Panesar
Bowler O M R W
Edwards 3 0 13 0
Powell 2 0 11 1

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Big bash
5 Caviar, basically
8 Bunch of cronies
12 Shake-speare's river
13 Author Fleming
14 A-line creator
15 Traveler's verification
17 Oppositionist
18 Humor
19 Sought prey
21 Taken for granted
24 Smooch
25 Hebrew month
26 Superintendent's ringful
30 Prepared
31 Judge, often
32 Right-turn command
33 Long-popular game show
35 Dove's home

DOWN
1 Hiatius
2 Ms. Gardner
3 Part of UCLA
4 Re-sponse
5 Laugh-a-minute
6 Scull tool
7 Filled with zeal
8 Polish port city
9 "Misbehavin'" member?
10 Staff
11 Grating
16 Wrestling
20 Abbr. on old Asian maps
Solution time: 21 mins.

LEG PLACED SOW
O E A G V E U R I
W I L L P O W E R N A P
E A R R A F F L E
S E L E C T T I L L
A L A V E N T I O N S
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CRYPTOQUIP

MXCS KCQKIC BFC VEFYHSD
QS B FQICF VQBYLCF,
VQEIN RQE YBR LXCRR'FC
YMCBFHSD EK BSN NQMS?
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: SHOULD A COMIC BOOK ABOUT SOME SUPER-POTENT BAKING STUFF GET TITLED "THE FANTASTIC FLOUR"?
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals P