

Harbhajan back to Surrey

AFP, London

Harbhajan Singh has rejoined Surrey and will link-up with the London-based club on July 2, the county announced Sunday.

The India off-spinner has been overlooked for his country's forthcoming three-Test and seven one-day international tour of England.

Now, with Surrey's Pakistan all-rounder Azhar Mahmood set to play in September's World Twenty20 in South Africa, officials have decided to bring back Harbhajan to The Oval where he played for the county in 2005.

Surrey are second bottom in the first division of the County Championship and have yet to win in the tournament this season.

"Let's be honest, Surrey haven't had the start to the season that we would like," said cricket manager Alan Butcher.

"We feel that a world-class spinner is an important part of improving our performance in the second half of the year," the former Surrey and England batsman added.

"Harbhajan is a great wicket taker, and with the club expecting Azhar Mahmood to play for Pakistan in the Twenty20 World Cup later this year, we no longer have to worry about a possible gap in our line up from August onwards.

"Azhar has made a great contribution to the club, and it's clear that international duty is a distinct possibility for him later this year, so we want to be prepared."

Harbhajan said: "This is obviously a great opportunity for me personally, and I can't wait to get out there and play some great cricket for Surrey. I want to make every performance count, with both bat and ball, and really look forward to catching up with my old team-mates soon."

The 26-year-old bowler, nicknamed 'The Turbanator' has taken 238 wickets in 57 Tests at an average of just under 30 apiece.

Stoner reigns supreme at Donnington

AFP, Donington

Casey Stoner of Australia extended his overall world championship lead after claiming his fifth victory of the season at the British MotoGP here on Sunday.

The Ducati rider finished ahead of American Colin Edwards, who started from pole position on his Yamaha, with Australian Chris Vermeulen of Suzuki third on a circuit made slippery following earlier rain at Donington Park.

Stoner added to his wins in Qatar, Turkey, China and Catalunya two weeks ago to extend his lead on Italian Valentino Rossi in the world standings after the Yamaha rider crossed in fourth position.

Last year's winner Dani Pedrosa of Spain finished eighth despite leading for the first four laps before Edwards took the lead which he held until mid-race when he took a bend too wide and was overtaken by Stoner.

Earlier Italian Honda rider Andrea Dovizioso scorched to victory under the rain in the 250cc category ahead of San Marino's Alex De Angelis and Hiroshi Aoyama of Japan.

Trescothick

FROM PAGE 17 season. I am improving and I'm certain I'm getting closer."

Trescothick also quit England's tour of India in February last year and he agreed he had to be willing to travel if he wanted an international recall.

"Clearly, if I want to continue my career I have to undertake another tour. But for now, if and when I get back to full fitness and I think I am okay and ready to play, I'll make myself available for England.

"If they don't pick me, that is just tough."



Did U Know?

The shortest woman to play in the Wimbledon Championships was Miss C G Hoathing of Great Britain (1937-1938) who was just 4 feet 9 inches.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh and Tangail striker Prince races past two Kishorgonj defenders during their National Hockey Championship match at the Moulana Bhasani Stadium yesterday.

Gs see off Ireland



AFP, Belfast

Gautam Gambhir and Sourav Ganguly's unbroken stand of 162 saw India to a nine-wicket win under the Duckworth-Lewis method in the one-off one-day international against Ireland at Stormont here Saturday.

India, set a revised target of 171 in 39 overs after rain delayed the start of their reply by nearly three hours, finished on 171 for one with 25 balls to spare.

Man-of-the-match Gambhir was 80 not out and fellow left-hander Ganguly 73 not out after batting star Sachin Tendulkar was bowled off the last ball of the first over by 26-year-old one-day international debutant Roger Whelan.

Earlier, India's teenage leg-spinner Piyush Chawla took a career-best three wickets for 29 runs as Ireland were bowled out for 193 in 50 overs.

The 18-year-old Chawla's figures, in his second match at this level, topped the three for 37 he took on debut against Bangladesh in Dhaka in May.

"It will be a long tour so it's important to start off well," Gambhir, 25 told reporters. For any cricketer, not just me, it's nice to start well and I'm pleased I got the runs.

"It's not like in India where you can just go out there and play through the line of the ball," added Gambhir after his 22nd one-day international.

"I toured England with India A so I know something about batting on these types of tracks. You want to start off a season on a high note and I'm happy about the way it's begun."

Ireland captain Trent Johnston, who made a valuable 34, said: "I thought we did pretty well to post 190 off 50 overs and the rain gave us 171 to defend which I thought was okay.

"Getting Tendulkar out first over, I thought something might happen here. I really did believe we had enough runs to do that but we just didn't ask enough questions and that was the disappointing thing."

Gambhir was not overawed by Tendulkar's early exit, clipping Whelan off his legs for four. He completed a 72-ball fifty featuring six fours before Ganguly reached the landmark, for the 68th time, in 79 deliveries.

The hosts were indebted to wicket-keeper Niall O'Brien's 52 and his stand of 48 with Johnston after they'd slumped to 121 for six following India captain Rahul Dravid's decision to field first.

Ireland, who produced the shock result of the World Cup when

beating Pakistan and advancing into the second round -- something India were unable to do after defeats by Bangladesh and Sri Lanka -- had just six survivors from their team in the Caribbean.

They struggled against the swinging ball before Chawla bowled Gary Wilson for 13 to leave them 75 for four.

Chawla, the successor to Anil Kumble, now retired from one-day internationals, then removed Kevin O'Brien via a top-edged a sweep to RP Singh.

Andrew White became his third wicket, caught off a thick edge by Karthik and that meant the Australian-born Johnston came in with Ireland on 111 for six. Johnston though pulled Sreesanth for Ireland's first six, in the 41st over.

Meanwhile O'Brien, completed a 78-ball fifty by driving left-arm quick Singh for his fourth four. But next ball the left-hander got a leading edge and was caught by debutant Rohit Sharma.

This was India's first match of a

Sunday.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the lone one-day international between Ireland and India at Stormont in Belfast on Saturday:

**IRELAND:** 193 all out in 50 overs (N O'Brien 52, Johnston 34; Sreesanth 3-50, Chawla 3-29)

**INDIA**

Ganguly not out 73  
Tendulkar b Whelan 4  
Gambhir not out 80  
Extras: (lb-7, w-7) 14

Total: (For 1 wkt in 34.5 overs) 171  
Fall of wickets: 1-9.

Did not bat: Dravid, Sharma, Yuvraj Singh, Karthik, Chawla, Agarkar, RP Singh, Sreesanth.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Whelan	8	0	56	1
Fourie	6.5	0	22	0
K O'Brien	4	0	25	0
Johnston	7	0	25	0
McCallan	8	0	31	0
White	1	0	5	0

**Result: India won by nine wickets (D/L method)**



PHOTO: AFP

Man-of-the-match Gautam Gambhir takes off for a single after working the ball on the off-side during his unbeaten knock of 80 against Ireland during the one-day international at Stormont in Belfast on Saturday.

tour that features three Tests and seven one-day internationals against England starting in July. Ireland are due to play South Africa in a one-day international here on Sunday.

India and South Africa then face one another in three one-day internationals at Stormont on Tuesday, Friday and a week on

**Man-of-the-match:** Gautam Gambhir.  
Toss: India  
Umpires: Billy Bowden (NZL) and Mark Benson (ENG)  
TV umpire: Aleem Dar (PAK)  
Match referee: Alan Hurst (AUS)

Rajshahi, Tangail make flying start

UNB, Dhaka

Rajshahi and Tangail made flying start to the 27th National Hockey Championship crushing their rivals in the first appearances at the Moulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

Rajshahi, riding on two hattricks by Panna and Krishna, earned a huge 9-1 victory over Comilla after dominating the first half by 4-0 in the afternoon.

Panna scored the day's first hattrick with three quick goals within 14 minutes while Krishna scored the second one with four goals, including the last three in a row. Shishu and Ronny netted the remaining two goals for Rajshahi.

Tabu netted the consolation goal for Comilla in the second half.

In another match of the day, a fine hattrick by Taifur Rahman enabled Tangail to earn a massive 12-1 victory over Kishoreganj at the same venue in the afternoon.

Taifur scored the day's third hattrick scoring five goals, Asif scored three, Tuhin netted two, Ashiquzzaman and Ariful scored one each for the winners while Mamun netted the lone goal for the losers.

Faridpur got walkover against Sylhet as the latter side did not field their team.

BHF picks 21 for Asia Cup camp

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Hockey Federation yesterday picked 21 players to join the training camp for the Asia Cup beginning in the Indian city of Chennai on September 19.

The selected players have been asked to report to team coach Mahbub Haroon and Abdullah Piru on July 1 at the Moulana Bhasani National Stadium.

Players: Rasel Khan Bappi, Mahbubullah Shakil, Issa Miah, Yamin Hossain, Moshir Rahman Biplob, Mustafizur Rahman Dinar, Mamunur Rahman Chayan, Mahbub Ehsan Rana, Musa Miah, Shahidullah Titu, Khandakar Hasan Ahmed, Mosharraf Hossain Kuti, Rasel Mahmud Jimmy, Zahidul Islam Rajon, Maksud Alam Habul, Zahid Bin Talib Shuvo Mohammad Zahid Hossain, Tabib-e-Noor, Arshaduzzaman, Mazharul Islam Moksed and Asif-e-Noor.

Third seamer

FROM PAGE 17 "I went back home without playing a match last time which was really frustrating. Actually it is always a big challenge to play against Sri Lanka because they are very special as a team. You can't compare them with any other side in the world. They have bowlers like Murali and Malinga and their batting is also altogether different from the other sides. I think their approach is totally different," he said.

"I am looking forward to bowling against them in their own soil. I think our whole squad is much more confident now. Let see what happen this time," said the lion-hearted cricketer.

3 skip Mexico's

FROM PAGE 20 Marquez, who was included for the Gold Cup but only joined the squad this week, was named along with other top players such as strikers Jared Borgetti and Cuauhtemoc Blanco.

Mexico's Copa America campaign kicks off against holders Brazil in Puerto Ordaz on Wednesday.

Anelka to step

FROM PAGE 20 According to the News of the World Wenger will target Ajax stars Klaas Jan Huntelaar and Ryan Babel as back-up if he fails to land Anelka.

The paper reported a source close to the Arsenal boss as saying: "...Arsene definitely believes Anelka is the ideal replacement.

"If he doesn't get Anelka then he will go for Jan Huntelaar -- and Babel is also a possibility."

Messi delighted

FROM PAGE 20 The Catalan giants are coming off their worst season since president Joan Laporta took charge in 2003-04, with only the Copa Catalunya title to show for their efforts in an otherwise fruitless campaign.

However, it was a fine line between success and failure for Rijkaard's troops, who finished level with champions Real Madrid on 76 points but surrendered their Primera Liga crown due to their inferior head-to-head record against their arch rivals this season.

Barca also reached the semifinals of the Copa del Rey, while they were beaten in both the finals of the UEFA Super Cup and the FIFA Club World Cup.

Aside from Henry, Barca have also been linked to Roma centre-back Cristian Chivu, Monaco midfielder Yaya Toure, Lyon's Eric Abidal and Jorge Andrade of Deportivo La Coruna.

Dav praises Pakistan



AFP, Karachi

Dav Whatmore Sunday praised new-look Pakistan as "positive and confident" after being interviewed for the vacancy left by the late Bob Woolmer.

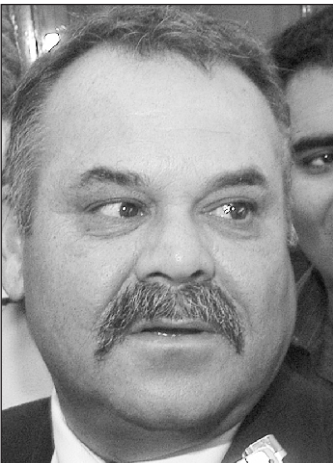
Whatmore, who leads a three-man race for the position, hailed the contribution of recently appointed captain Shoaib Malik after meeting the players during a brief stay.

"From my point of view I found the team vibrant, positive and confident and my understanding is that the shift in captaincy with a younger guy coming in brought this change," the former Bangladesh coach told AFP.

Malik was brought in to help Pakistan recover from a traumatic World Cup when they were knocked out in the first round and Woolmer was found dead in his hotel room a day later.

After months of frenzied speculation about how the coach died, Jamaican police retracted their original statement that he had been

murdered. The 53-year-old Whatmore, former Australian fast bowler Geoff



DAV WHATMORE

Lawson and Richard Done are all in the running to take over.

"I had known some of the players from opposition point of view but in my short interaction I found them eager to do well which is a good sign," said Whatmore, who met the

players at a training camp in Abbottabad.

Whatmore, who had two stints with Sri Lanka including their 1996 World Cup win, appears favourite because of his experience and knowledge of cricket in the sub-continent.

He guided Bangladesh to the second round of this year's World Cup before deciding to leave the job. He also showed interest in coaching India but was rejected.

Despite his experiences with Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, the Australian admitted Pakistan would present a challenge.

"Pakistan, despite not having the best of World Cups, are still number three in Tests and four in one-day rankings and are a better performing team in terms of their wins in last few years, but with the bigger team comes bigger challenges," he said.

Pakistan hope to name their new coach this week. The appointee is expected to take over before September's inaugural Twenty20 World Cup in South Africa.

Federer looks Borg in the eye

FROM PAGE 20

and no one should be shocked if she or her sister winds up pocketing the Grand Slam-record 1.4 million-dollar check the women's singles champion will receive.

"It's a step in the right direction," Serena Williams said, "for not only tennis but just for women's sports, for women all around."

One Williams or the other has won five of the past seven Wimbledon championships, despite never participating in any grass-court warm-up events beforehand. Instead, they go home to the United States after the French Open and prepare to play on grass by practicing on, uh, hard courts.

"They're very similar," Serena Williams said with a wink and a smile. "You just get on a really slick, old ghetto court that's real fast, and you'll be fine. It's actually faster than Wimbledon. That's why we're so good."

Regardless of the reason, they are indeed good. So, too, is top-ranked Justine Henin, who won the French Open for her sixth Grand Slam title, a total that trails only Serena Williams' eight among active players.

While Federer is missing the French Open from his collection, Henin needs only a Wimbledon title to fill out a career Grand Slam. And like Federer, Henin has come close, losing to Venus

Williams in the 2001 final and to Amelie Mauresmo in last year's final.

Finally winning Wimbledon "would be a great achievement, that's for sure," said Henin, who beat Mauresmo on Saturday for the title at a grass-court tournament at Eastbourne. "But would that make me more happy? I'm not sure."

How much would winning another Wimbledon mean to Federer?

On the very day he won his fourth consecutive title, 50 weeks ago, he spoke these words: "I'm looking forward to next year, obviously."