



Did U Know?

New Zealand cricket legend Martin Crowe would always tie the pad on his left leg first. He thought that brought him luck.



Richard Bevan

(Chief executive of the Professional Cricketers' Association)
"If I acted like them I'd expect to have my backside kicked, but nobody seems to take responsibility."
While criticising the International Cricket Council.



STAR Sports

Wimbledon Championships
Men's Singles Finals & Ladies Doubles Finals
LIVE from 4:30 pm
TEN Sports
Copa America
Quarterfinals
Mexico v Paraguay
Live at 2:05 am (Monday)
Argentina v Peru
Live at 4:50 am (Monday)



Superstar trio opts out

AFP, Mumbai/Colombo

Indian batting stars Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid and Sourav Ganguly have opted out of the inaugural Twenty20 World Championship in South Africa in September, selectors announced here on Saturday.

"I think they wanted to give a chance to youngsters. I got a call from (captain) Rahul who said they were opting out of the tournament," chief selector Dilip Vengsarkar said after India named a 30-man preliminary squad.

The trio are currently in England for the Test and one-day series. Each has scored more than 10,000 runs in one-day internationals.

The final 15-man squad will be announced next month.

Batsman Virender Sehwag and off-spinner Harbhajan Singh were named after being ignored for the England tour.

The selectors also announced a 16-man India 'A' squad for the tours of Zimbabwe and Kenya starting later this month.

Meanwhile, World Cup runners-up Sri Lanka on Saturday named a 30-man preliminary squad for the inaugural Twenty20 world championships in South Africa in September.

INDIA
Robin Uthappa, Virender Sehwag, Yuvraj Singh, Mahendra Dhoni, Mohammad Kaif, Dinesh Karthik, Rohit Sharma, Gautam Gambhir, Yusuf Pathan, Suresh Raina, Manoj Tiwary, Neeraj Patel, Karan Goel, Cheteshwar Pujara, Abhishek Jhunjhunwala, Rudra Pratap Singh, Ishant Sharma, Zaheer Khan, Irfan Pathan, Ajit Agarkar, Shanthakumaran Sreesanth, Munaf Patel, Joginder
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A mother for the ages

BISHWAJIT ROY from Colombo

A mother who lives in an old-fashioned house at Tichborne Lane in the city has every right to deserve a place in cricket history. It isn't a big deal to find her house as almost anyone can locate it for you in the neighbourhood.

A very simple and tranquil setting is where the elderly mother is living with some domestic helps around. She never played the game but has a great contribution in her country's glorious cricket progress. It's nothing exceptional for a family to produce a few international cricketers but what is special for Nandani Ranatunga was that she did all the hard work in very tough days to make four international cricketers out of her six sons. And one of them was none other than Sri Lanka's World Cup winning captain Arjuna Ranatunga, the man who single-handedly rewrote his country's cricket history. Arjuna, time and again, has recalled his mother's contribution behind the success and there are many who also believe that it is so.

She is well-known in the island's cricketer circles not only for her second son who captained Sri Lanka to great successes during his career of 93 Tests and 269 one-dayers, but also because of his eldest son Dammika, who played two Tests while Nishantha played only two one-dayers and Sanjeeva was capped nine times in Tests and 13 times in one-day internationals. Prasanna played club cricket but he had the knack in politics while the youngest, Ruwan, only played at the under-17 levels before switching to other professions.

If someone thought that she was very proud of her sons' successes in cricket then he or she is definitely making a great mistake. In her philosophy, success is only the last goal in life and there is something else to achieve.

"Honestly speaking, I am not
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PHOTO: AFP

SMILE OF A CHAMPION: Venus Williams of the United States is ecstatic after winning the Wimbledon Ladies' Singles title beating Frenchwoman Marion Bartoli in the final in London yesterday.

'Mahela was right'



BISHWAJIT ROY from Colombo

This time Bangladesh got two extra off-days after the second Test but definitely it was not happy leisure for the Tigers after the way Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene put them in their place.

The Lankan skipper reminded everyone that one or two individual efforts meant nothing if a team lost the game inside three days. After playing seven years at this level, it was hard to be excited with a hundred because now the team's overall performance is equally important.

That was the reason nobody tried to focus much on Ashraful's unbeaten hundred and Mushfiqur Rahim's valiant 80. Rather, every-one was trying to find the solution of

both first innings debacles.

"It is true. What can we say about his comments when we lost the game inside three days? It's really a bad feeling to practice in the nets and take rest when we are supposed to be in the ground," admitted Bangladesh captain Ashraful, who had a quiet 23rd birthday. There was no party as he spent most of the day in his hotel room.

"I agree with him (Jayawardene) that we should be more competitive in Test cricket. I can recall how excited I was when I made 158 against India at Chittagong although the team lost inside three days. But now I have hardly any excitement although the century has given me confidence to do better in the third Test," said the pocket-sized dynamo.

Ashraful however was not ready to accept criticism from his counterpart about his batting position in the second innings.

"True the best batsman should prefer to bat at the top of the order and number six is not an ideal place for me. You know, I also love to bat at four or five but we promoted Mehrrab considering his ability as an opener. My desire was to start the third day afresh although finally I had to come out on the second day. He (Mahela) has every right to criticise me but what we did it due to the team's interest," he said.

Middle-order batsman Tushar Imran joined the team yesterday and is expected to play the third Test at Kandy starting from July 11 but the new Bangladesh captain was not ready to see his inclusion as a rescue act.

"Efforts from one or two batsmen would not be enough. The entire top-order should click if we want to survive in the first innings. I must say our tail-enders' batting
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Gayle, Morton lead WI



AFP, Nottingham

Runako Morton's 82 not out was the centrepiece of West Indies' 289 for five against England in the third and final one-day international at Trent Bridge here Saturday, as they looked to come from behind to clinch the series 2-1.

For the second match in a row England were unable to prevent West Indies scoring more than 100 runs in the last 10 overs, the tourists taking 116 off an inexperienced and wayward seam attack this time.

LATEST

England were in trouble in pursuit of 290 runs set by West Indies. In reply, they were 108-4 in 25 overs after Daren Powell picked 3 wickets in no time to remove the England top order.

Morton, dropped on four, shared a fourth-wicket stand of 85 with captain Chris Gayle (82), dropped on four and 20, and then put on 92 with Dwayne Bravo (42). He faced just 89 balls with one six and six fours.

Stuart Broad was the most expensive England bowler, his nine overs costing 71 runs

Curiously, neither recalled spinner Monty Panesar (six overs for 28) or Dimitri Mascarenahs (eight overs for 28) bowled their
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PHOTO: AFP

West Indies' Runako Morton hoists one over long-off for a six on way to scoring an unbeaten 82 against England in the third and final one-day international at Trent Bridge in Nottingham yesterday.

BCB wait on coaches' dates

SPORTS REPORTER

The three prime candidates for the post of Bangladesh cricket coach will finalise their arrival dates next week.

According to Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) general secretary Mahub Anam, Australians Jamie Siddons and Richard McInnes and former Zimbabwe captain Dave Houghton have asked for a week's time to decide on their interview dates with the cricket board.

Mahub said, "We have received several applications but we have kept these three (Siddons, McInnes and Houghton) as the main contenders. But due to technical and personal schedule issues, they will let us know the dates next week."

Meanwhile, Houghton quit his post as the director of cricket in English county Derbyshire though his contract expires only at the end of 2007.

"I am obviously disappointed to be leaving because I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here but this is the best way forward for both the club and myself," said Houghton.

"I hope to find another role in cricket before too long and wish Derbyshire every success for the future."

Club captain Simon Katich and the remaining coaching staff would take over Houghton's duties for the rest of the season. Derbyshire are currently languishing in the fifth spot of the second division of the county championship.

Houghton, who was Zimbabwe's
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BFF closing in on Nayeem

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) is expected to finalise the appointment of Syed Nayeemuddin as coach of the national football team in a couple of days.

"We have asked former Indian national football coach Syed Nayeemuddin about the salary and other facilities he expects... he is likely to reply in a day or two," said BFF deputy general secretary Manzur Hossain while talking to UNB yesterday.

Earlier on Thursday, BFF formally proposed Nayeemuddin to take charge of the national football team till the SAFF Championship to be held in December in Male and Colombo.

Nayeemuddin reportedly accepted the BFF proposal instantly.

Venus back to glory

AFP, Wimbledon



she overpowered surprise finalist Marion Bartoli here on Saturday.

Although the contest was far closer than the 6-4, 6-1 scoreline suggested, the American, seeded only 23rd as a result of injuries which have severely restricted her playing schedule, always looked the more likely winner.

She added to her 2000, 2001 and 2005 titles with another turbo-charged display of tennis against an opponent who had created one of the biggest surprises in the

tournament's history by beating world number one Justine Henin in the semifinal.

Bartoli, who had never previously gone beyond the fourth round at any Grand Slam tournament, had come back from a set down in the wins over Jelena Jankovic, Michaela Krajicek and Henin which had carried her to the most unexpected of final appearances.

But there was to be no repeat of those heroics against Williams, who reproduced the kind of form she had displayed in demolishing two Grand Slam winners, Maria Sharapova and Svetlana Kuznetsova, in her quarterfinal and semifinal matches.

Williams, who has battled back to the top after missing much of last year with a wrist injury, said she had been inspired by her sister Serena's comeback to win the Australian Open in January.

"My family know what I went through," she said. "It has been a long road back but I am so happy to have brought it all together here."

Williams becomes only the fourth woman in the Open era to have won four Wimbledon titles, following in the footsteps of Martina Navratilova, Steffi Graf and Billie Jean King.

"I always believed I could do it, but to actually do it is something else completely," she said.

The win also ensured that Williams became the lowest-seeded Wimbledon winner in the women's singles, beating her own record of winning as 14th seed in 2005.

Bartoli acknowledged that she simply did not have enough weapons at her disposal to counter the Williams arsenal on grass.

She said: "I tried to focus until
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