

BCCI to discuss rebel series

PTI, New Delhi
The appointment of a new coach of the Indian cricket team and the tussle with the breakaway Indian Cricket League will come up for discussion when top BCCI officials meet here on Wednesday.

The BCCI and the ICL, a brain-child of Subhash Chandra-owned Essel Group, have been engaged in a vicious war of words over the last few days and the Board officials are expected to deliberate at length on the issue.

"It is not listed in the agenda but the matter will come up for discussion. The BCCI will deliberate on all the aspects of the League and formulate a strategy," a BCCI source said.

With the ICL stepping up its efforts to rope in star players, the BCCI had last week threatened to impose life bans on those who joined the rebel league.

The top brass of the Board may also decide on taking action against Kapil Dev who has aligned with the rebel body despite being the chairman of the National Cricket Academy.

BCCI President Sharad Pawar has already said that withdrawing Kapil Dev's retirement benefits would be discussed at the Special General Body Meeting to be held in Mumbai on August 21.



National hockey players take part in the opening day of practice at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium yesterday before leaving to participate in the next month's Asian Hockey Competition in Delhi.

Helal's last

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possibilities of the Bangladesh Cricket Board-like mass resignation.

"If any such thing happens, the federation will be run under FIFA and AFC guidelines," said the former MP of the BNP-led government.

"We have already sent the draft constitution of the regional football associations to the National Sports Council. It would take some time for their approval and finally the approval of the FIFA and AFC. So it is possible to hold the election by three to four months," Sultan said adding that the BFF does not need any reform because the election itself is a kind of reform.

India await

FROM PAGE 17
lives in Cheshire, north-west England, was a member of the side that won The Oval in 1971 - India's first Test victory on English soil which also gave them the series 1-0.

Then, as now with Anil Kumble, India had a world-class leg-spinner in the extraordinary Bhagwat Chandrasekhar. There were other similarities too.

In 1971, even more than 2007, the sight of a fast bowler barging into a batsman provoked anguish commentary about cricket's declining sportsmanship.

That was certainly the case when England fast bowler John Snow barged into Gavaskar in the first Test at Lord's 36 years ago.

India pace bowler's Shanthakumaran Sreesanth's brush into England captain Michael Vaughan at Trent Bridge seems mild by comparison. Snow was dropped following his misdemeanour; Sreesanth's fate remains uncertain.

Snow returned at The Oval where Chandrasekhar, whose bowling arm had been withered by childhood polio, took six for 38 in England's second innings to leave India with a victory target of 173.

It took them 101 overs but they got there in the end. Engineer, who finished on 28 not out, recalled: "Those 28 I scored were like 108."

He also told Britain's Sunday Times: "Any victory in a Test series was joyous but to beat England in England was a phenomenal feat at the time for us Indians." Indeed, it's only happened since once, in 1986.

India, currently touring without an overall team coach, are at less risk than most sides of being burdened with an excessive amount of theory and thus may be well placed to follow Chandrasekhar's example.

"I have never been a bowler who planned things. Most of the time I bowled whatever I felt like."

What price history repeating itself later this week?

Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 17
Iraq - which won its first-ever Asian Cup in late July with a 1-0 win over Saudi Arabia - on Friday was seeded a lowly 12th for the World Cup qualifying tournament.

Teams like Kuwait and North Korea, who did not even qualify for the Asian Cup, were seeded higher.

"We made the seedings in accordance with the FIFA ruling and all countries under our umbrella know how the seedings are made," Nohra said.

"As such, there can be no complaints. The seedings were based on performances done in the last two years and not only this year."

The draw created a number of intriguing match-ups, with Iraq to face Pakistan, while sixth-seeded Bahrain will take on Malaysia.

The top five teams - Australia, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Japan and Iran - have been given a bye into the third round.

Of the 19 teams that make it through the first round, the lowest eight battle in the second round for four spots in the third round, while the top 11 move directly into the third round.

The first home-and-away knockout round will take place on October 8 and October 28 while the second round is scheduled for November 9 and November 18.

The draw for the third round will take place in Durban, South Africa, on November 25, 2007.

In the third round, the 20 teams are split into five groups of four, with the top two from each group advancing.

The 10 remaining teams are split into two groups. The top two teams in each group qualify automatically for the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

THE PAIRINGS FOR ROUND 1

- 1) Pakistan v Iraq
2) Uzbekistan v Taiwan
3) Thailand v Macau
4) Sri Lanka v Qatar
5) China v Myanmar
6) Bhutan v Kuwait
7) Kyrgyzstan v Jordan
8) Vietnam v UAE
9) Bahrain v Malaysia
10) East Timor v Hong Kong
11) Syria v Afghanistan
12) Yemen v Maldives
13) Bangladesh v Tajikistan
14) Mongolia v North Korea
15) Oman v Nepal
16) Palestine v Singapore
17) Lebanon v India
18) Cambodia v Turkmenistan
19) Guam v Indonesia
Match days: October 8 and 28

Harmison's faith in Tremlett

Cricket
CRICINFO, undated

England need to bounce back at The Oval if they are to square the series against India, and Steve Harmison believes Chris Tremlett's height will be instrumental to their fortunes.

In recent years The Oval's pitch has not been quite as lively as it was ten years ago, but Harmison - who played on the surface a couple of weeks ago - is confident that Tremlett and his 6ft 7in frame can extract sufficient bounce to trouble India.

"I think Chris Tremlett bowls at The Oval as he did at Trent Bridge then England will win," Harmison told The Guardian at an event run by Chance to Shine in Ashington. "I played on that pitch for Durham and it is perfectly suited to Chris with lots of bounce. It was the bounce he got that upset the Indians at Trent Bridge and the wicket at The Oval is just right to get results."

Tremlett, Harmison's deputy, has made an encouraging start to his Test career and picked up six wickets in his second Test at Trent Bridge. In India's first innings, on a flat surface, he chugged in for 40 overs and took 3 for 80 - proving the doubters that he has worked hard on his fitness in the past couple of years.

"The question mark that's hung over him has been if his body can hold up to Test cricket," Harmison said, "because you can't pick someone if they're going to play one Test and miss the next three. He needed a half season of solid cricket to get his body right and bowl consistently and it was great to see him bowl 40 overs at Trent Bridge. Maybe his body has grown into international cricket now."

"I toured with Chris in 2001 at the Academy and he's always looked a Test bowler; he's got it all going for him."

And Harmison welcomes the extra competition that Tremlett and Ryan Sidebottom - who has bowled with a consistency belying his inexperience - provide.

"It's been encouraging to see new bowlers come through such as Tremlett and Sidebottom and means that Hogg, Freddie and me will have to fight for our places," he said. "Could I bowl well with Chris? The only way you'll know is to give it a chance. People might say we're very similar but you pick the four bowlers most likely to take wickets, whether they're 6ft 7in and use the bounce or 5ft 10in with swing."

BCCI scared of ICL: Bedi

Cricket
PTI, New Delhi

The BCCI's opposition to the rebel Indian Cricket League (ICL) is grounded in its fear of being exposed as an inefficient organisation, feels legendary spinner Bishan Singh Bedi.

"The BCCI cannot ban players for playing in the league. Suppose you are working for a company and join another after some time, your former employers cannot stop you from earning your livelihood. That's illegal," Bedi said on the sidelines of a book release function here last night.

"Cricket is not their personal property and they have no right to stop anybody from joining this league. Actually the board is scared that if the ICL turns out to be a well organised event, then their own failures would be exposed," he added.

Bedi felt though the ICL organisers are only trying to mint money out of the country's obsession with cricket, players cannot be barred from being a part of the league. "I don't think it is something on the lines of Kerry Packer series, so there should not be any objection in the first place. I don't know whether this league would be good for the game in the long run but there is no harm in allowing it to take place," he said.

Bedi also came out in support of National Cricket Academy chairman Kapil Dev, who has been threatened with a sack for joining the league. "I don't think it would be appropriate to take away his job on this ground," he said.

"I have a gym at home and use instruments whenever I get them. I am working on my shooting. I have to add more power and be perfect. In football, you always learn. I have to be consistent."

When asked, he said he did not think he was the best striker of current time. "It's a matter for other people to judge. But my target is to become not only the country's number one striker but also the top footballer."

Emily, who has three goals in the AFC Cup, said he wanted to get back to the Asian club competition with Abahani this season and wished he could impress in the other international meets.

"We have many international tournaments this year including SAFF Championship. This is a great chance for me to flourish. I think my goal against India is my best so far and I want to be better than that."

Zaheer rested due to bruised heel

Cricket
CRICINFO, undated

Zaheer Khan has been left out of the Twenty20 World Championship because of a bruised heel, Dilip Vengsarkar, India's chairman of selectors, has confirmed.

He also said Sreesanth's axing, for the one-day series in England, had nothing to do with his attitude and wished it would act as a spur-on for The Oval Test.

Zaheer has been included in the seven-match ODI series following the Oval Test but left out of the inaugural Twenty20 World Championship in South Africa. "Zaheer Khan has a bruised heel. He will require rest and he's got three weeks," Vengsarkar said. "He's asked us to give him rest."

He also justified Munaf Patel's call-up, at the expense of Sreesanth. "Munaf is in form. I think he's bowling well. He is playing the KSCA tournament at the moment and he is fit. He will be useful here. Sreesanth has not been dropped because of attitude. He is out of the squad only for the one-dayers but will be there for the Twenty20. It should spur him on and he should do much better. Definitely he should play in the Test match."

Nottingham proved a happier experience for Jaffer this time. His half-century set the base for India's imposing total, and he followed it up with two handy scores against Sri Lanka A in Leicester. Looking back at his previous tour to England, he termed it a life-changing experience and felt he'd "matured" in the intervening period.

"I was four years younger then," he said matter-of-factly when asked the difference between the previous tour and this one. "That tour changed me completely. I learnt quite a lot. I went back to domestic cricket and corrected whatever mistakes I'd made. It made me determined to make a comeback and I'm more mature now."

He was exposed on the previous tour mainly because of his tendency to neither getting forward or back, stuck in a position that cricketers refer to as half-cock. He was in a similar muddle at the start of this tour as well, unable to make a meaningful contribution against Sussex and England Lions, but has looked far more assured in the Tests.

SLC release Atapattu

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's cricket governing body Monday released former captain Marvan Atapattu from his contract, effectively ending his career with the national team.

"We decided at this evening's committee meeting to release Marvan Atapattu from his contract from October 1," Kangadaran Mathivanan, secretary of Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) told AFP.

Final say

FROM PAGE 17
while left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique reportedly expressed his desire to skip the meet.

"Mashrafe will definitely be considered if he is fit. I don't know about Rafique's desire. We have yet to get any official word from the board about Mashrafe's fitness and Rafique's desire," Faruque informed.

Bangladesh has been placed in Group A along with hosts South Africa and West Indies in the competition, starting from September 11.

The Tigers for the first time will go through a special conditioning camp next week in Sylhet under a unit of Bangladesh Army to warm up for the Twenty20 World Championship.

The six-day camp, under the 'Special Warfare Wing', will begin on August 11.

Panel to settle

FROM PAGE 20
muscle injury in my leg but it is only minor and will not keep me out for long.

"I've spoken with the coach (Ferguson) and I have insisted that my wish is to leave the club if a big offer appears on the table.

"Today the only such offer is from Liverpool and it is this that is causing the problem. Earlier in the summer I received a promise from United that I could leave if the deal was good for both parties and at the moment there is an offer from Liverpool."

England's advantage

Cricket
CRICINFO, undated

Funny as it now seems, after a decade of barely relenting hopelessness in one-day cricket, there was a time - not so long ago - when England all but ruled the world in the limited-overs game.

Admittedly, they never actually won the World Cup, but in five tournaments from 1979 to 1992 they were the very model of consistency. They reached the final on no fewer than three occasions, and were never eliminated before the last four.

The reason for that relative success was simple. England played more limited-overs cricket than any other nation - starting with the Gillette Cup way back in 1963 - and consequently had more situational experience to fall back on than any other nation.

Asia and Australia have since left the game's creators trailing in their wake, but suddenly there's a new kid in town. Barely four years after its inception in the summer of 2003, Twenty20 cricket has its very own World Championship. And once again, it is England that has hogged most of the experience on offer.

When England's 30-man preliminary squad was announced last month, the names were split into two very distinct camps. There were those who might be termed Twenty20 specialists - the likes of Darren Maddy, Jeremy Snape, Chris Schofield and Luke Wright, who've starred for their counties precisely because they've not been featuring for England. And then there were the established stars - the likes of Alastair Cook, Ian Bell, Andrew Flintoff and Kevin Pietersen - of whom more than just a handful have been culled from the final squad.

In years gone by, the specialists might have been included in the preliminary squad for novelty's sake, before being jettisoned at the last minute to accommodate the tried-and-trusted - you can't imagine Duncan Fletcher, for instance,

conceding a complete revamp of his squad with just five days between the end of the seventh ODI against India at Lord's, and the first of England's Twenty20 matches against Zimbabwe at Cape Town.

England's chairman of selectors, David Graveney, however, signalled that a new approach had been adopted for a new era. "In the past," said Graveney, "we have said: 'This is our best group of cricketers, and they can play any form of cricket, any way, anywhere in the world.' But that may not be the case. We have had a little bit of a shift in terms of what is the way we want to play and who can fulfil the role. The guys that we have selected, who have had the opportunity to play Twenty20 cricket, are the form players."

Consequently, the selectors have taken a gamble on Schofield, who was the joint leading wicket-taker in this year's tournament with 17 scalps at 8.82. They have backed the enduring consistency of Darren Maddy, who won two titles with Leicestershire Foxes and whose tally of 1278 runs in 43 games (at a strike-rate of 134.52) makes him the most prolific English batsman in the history of Twenty20, and second only to the Australian Brad Hodge.

They have examined James Anderson's tendency to be erratic under pressure and given a heart-warming opportunity to another long-term outcast, Kirtley. And they have ignored the claims of Bell, Cook, and a host of familiar 50-overs stalwarts, and have instead taken a chance on the Sussex youngster Wright, who in June hurtled to a 45-ball century against the eventual tournament winners, Kent. "He's an exciting talent," said Graveney. "He brings energy to the stage and this is an energy game."

Whether the mixture is sufficient to break England's duck in global tournaments remains to be seen, but the one thing that England do have is an understanding of the dynamics of Twenty20 cricket that can only be gleaned through experience. "We have to cover the areas

to attack the first six overs, and keep enough in the hatch to get the maximum runs in the last five," said Graveney, using the sort of jargon that will be alien to any nation that has not tasted Twenty20 cricket to the same extent.

England, for the first time in the long time, are pioneers in the global game. "I think it's great that the ECB has been instrumental in creating a form of the game that's now a worldwide brand," said Graveney. "And in light of the 50-over World Cup where we didn't perform to our capabilities, this is now an opportunity to show what we can do, albeit with a slightly different personnel. But there are big differences in the types of game. This form is really quick, and you need to think on your feet, have great variation and be very proactive. There's not enough time to go up to the bowler every single ball."

England have picked a side that will be self-governing. Snape, Solanki, Maddy and Kirtley will need no team orders to get on with what they do best, and in Pietersen, Collingwood and Flintoff, the selectors have dispensed with all the dawdlers from the 50-over World Cup, and left themselves only those whose batting styles brook no equivocation. How the two extremes of the squad gel remains to be seen, but in a 13-day slab-pang tournament the glory-boys and the journeymen shouldn't find it too difficult to muck in together.

Undoubtedly there will be some teams that still regard Twenty20 cricket as a gimmick - Australia, for all that they stuffed England in their recent match-up in Sydney, have not quite embraced it to the fullest extent, and India have been positively stand-offish about the concept. "But one thing's for sure," said Graveney, "when they all turn up in South Africa, they'll all be competing to win."

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petition is very strong compared to county cricket." His half-century allowed India to hold on to a draw in their three-day match, though a late stumble caused a few flutters. "We thought they would set us a rate of 4.5 or five an over and we would have gone for it," he said when asked about Sri Lanka's delayed declaration. "But they set us a higher rate and it was tough. We went for it initially but later had to play out. Yuvraj (Singh) and (Mahendra Singh) Dhoni got out and Rahul (Dravid) was supposed to bat later. But even when he was out the wicket was playing well. Gautam (Gambhir) was batting well and Ramesh (Powar) can bat. So the mood in the dressing-room was okay."

The 12-nation Twenty20 world championships will be played in three South African cities, Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban, from September 11-24.

India are drawn with Pakistan and Scotland in group D of the preliminary league, with the top two advancing to the Super Eights round.

The tournament features the nine nations currently playing Test cricket along with Zimbabwe, Kenya and Scotland.

Jaffer 'more matured'

Cricket
CRICINFO, undated

Five years ago Wasim Jaffer left Trent Bridge uncertain. In India's second Test of their previous tour, he'd endured a double-failure (0 and 5) and unsure of his place for the next match at Headingley. He was eventually left out for Sanjay Bangar, who went on to play a pivotal role in the side's series-leveling win, and began a period of exile that was to last four years.

Nottingham proved a happier experience for Jaffer this time. His half-century set the base for India's imposing total, and he followed it up with two handy scores against Sri Lanka A in Leicester. Looking back at his previous tour to England, he termed it a life-changing experience and felt he'd "matured" in the intervening period.

"I was four years younger then," he said matter-of-factly when asked the difference between the previous tour and this one. "That tour changed me completely. I learnt quite a lot. I went back to domestic cricket and corrected whatever mistakes I'd made. It made me determined to make a comeback and I'm more mature now."

He was exposed on the previous tour mainly because of his tendency to neither getting forward or back, stuck in a position that cricketers refer to as half-cock. He was in a similar muddle at the start of this tour as well, unable to make a meaningful contribution against Sussex and England Lions, but has looked far more assured in the Tests.

England, who came within a wicket of taking a 1-0 lead at Lord's, now find themselves having to win against India on the other side of London's River Thames if they are to preserve their six-year unbeaten run in home Test series.

They came from 1-0 down to secure a draw in India 18 months ago and Panesar is first test of a repeat performance.

"In that first Test maybe the man upstairs didn't want us to win and the clouds came. These things happen in cricket and then in the second Test India played very well," said Panesar, speaking at the launch of an Urban cricket arena on a housing estate in Brixton, near The Oval.

Monty urges

FROM PAGE 17
as well," said the ever optimistic Panesar.

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Dhoni made

FROM PAGE 17
Johannesburg last December.

The Indians won that game by a flattering six-wicket margin, chasing down South Africa's 126-9 with one delivery to spare.

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A Jharkhand

FROM PAGE 17
India cap. So to have not only played for India but also been given the honour of leading the country, I think is a historic day for Jharkhand," he said.

"I hope it will inspire young cricketers all over Jharkhand to dream big and pursue them with a lot of determination and hard work."

Pakistan go

FROM PAGE 17
by all-rounder Shoaib Malik and also includes left-arm spinner Abdul Rahman.

Pakistan open their campaign in the Twenty20 World Cup with a match against qualifiers Scotland at Durban on September 12 and then take on arch rivals India at the same venue two days later.

Top two teams qualify for the round of Eight.

Emily aims higher

FROM PAGE 17
Emily, one of the very few to inherit the prestigious No. 10 shirt used by club and country legend Salahuddin, took a pass from Ujjal to unleash a right-footed volley from 40 yards into the top left corner.

Emily also blames Cruciani's system for not having his freedom as the centre forward.

"With three players up front, I played at flanks which I do not like. I believe when the team switched to 4-4-2, I was in my perfect position. "I admit that my finishing early in the league was poor. It is difficult for a striker to maintain form and I was really suffering. I missed sitters and struggled on one-on-one situations."

Emily was not picked by Amalesh Sen, who took over from Cruciani after nine matches, in the starting lineup of the first two games of the second leg but he came as substitutes and saw a goal

what could have been the match winner against Mohammedan ruled out.

He took off from the next match with a four-goal burst against Rahmatganj that brought back his confidence. He went on to score in all but two remaining matches to spearhead Abahani's campaign to put an end to trophy-less six years.

Not only getting behind the rival backline timely, he was also getting behind the ball now and again.

Emily said he loves running and winning possession for teammates. He also said his lack of height inspires him for more hard work.

"I was free of pressure and full of confidence in the latter stages. My finishing got better and I was fighting every inch for possession. I enjoyed it," said Emily, who has been working individually to enhance his performance. "I have a gym at home and use

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
37 West Point student
5 Pop the decks
9 Paving the way
12 "O'hello" villain
13 - Major
14 Coloration
15 Shrink, maybe
17 Historic time
18 Atomizer output
19 Early feeding time
21 Change of Scott
24 Coffin
25 Comedian Jay
26 Suiitor's task
30 Eisenhower
31 Stocks and --
32 Menagerie
33 Mess
35 Alpha follower
36 Related (to)

Grid for crossword puzzle with numbers 1-36 indicating starting positions for words.

CRYPTOQUIP
J V W L K H K L T L W K P Z N
B Y A A H W G V K M Y B W P T K Z Z
H D T T W G D F , N A D H M B V P
T K N V W ' T L A J G W - F K Y P W G .
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF I MAKE AN ERROR ABOUT THE KIND OF BLOOD SOMEBODY HAS, I RECKON IT COULD BE A TYPE-O TYPE.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals H