

Rajput named India manager

AFP, New Delhi

India's junior coach Lalchand Rajput was on Wednesday named manager of the Indian team for the inaugural Twenty20 World Championships in South Africa in September.

Rajput, 45, played two Tests as an opening batsman in 1985 and served Mumbai with distinction in first-class cricket before being given charge of the Indian under-19 team last year.

Rajput replaces Chandu Borde, the manager for the ongoing Test and one-day tour of England, as India continue stop-gap arrangements in the absence of a regular coach since Greg Chappell resigned in April.

Former captain-turned-commentator Ravi Shastri managed the team on the tour of Bangladesh in May but declined to continue, citing media commitments.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said on Wednesday it will advertise for the post of national coach within the next week.

"We want to get a coach as early as possible," BCCI spokesman Rajiv Shukla told reporters after a meeting of its top officials here.

Wicketkeeper Mahendra Singh Dhoni was on Tuesday appointed captain of a revamped Indian team for the Twenty20 world meet in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban from September 11-24.

Regular captain Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly and Zaheer Khan opted out of the tournament to rest ahead of a busy season that features matches against Australia and Pakistan.

India are drawn with Pakistan and Scotland in group D of the preliminary league of the Twenty20 competition, 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.

Surprise awaits

FROM PAGE 17 already bestowed a plot to the swashbuckling wicketkeeper-batsman to construct a house.

Dhoni's elevation as captain has sent fans in his hometown into raptures.

The news also brought ecstasy to Dhoni's parents, who expressed confidence that their son would excel in his new role.

Jharkhand State Cricket Association president Amitabh Choudhury said, "I am of the firm belief that Dhoni will come up trumps in his new role too."

Swing to win

FROM PAGE 17 both sides to focus on the job in hand at his old home ground. "I think both camps would have been told to reel themselves in a little bit.

"The other thing is if England get sucked in it will detract from their ability to play good cricket and the only way they can win at The Oval is by playing good, hard cricket.

"I'm all for playing the game hard but if it starts detracting from your own performance then that becomes a problem."

Play ICL

FROM PAGE 17 Other big names reportedly in negotiations with the ICL are ageing veterans Inzamam-ul-Haq of Pakistan, Sanath Jayasuriya of Sri Lanka and New Zealand all-rounder Chris Cairns.

Importantly, no Indian star currently touring England has been linked to the rebel series, prompting BCCI president Pawar to dismiss the ICL last week as a "veterans series no one will want to watch."

Fergie's house

FROM PAGE 20 Carlos Queiroz took the remaining players to Belfast.

"I told her I had a match but she wasn't having any of that," Ferguson said. "She said it was a friendly and I had to help her.

"Actually, she's saved me from making a difficult choice. My father played for Glenfortran but I also have close associations with Dunfermline, where I played the best football of my career before my transfer to Rangers."

Gomez best

FROM PAGE 20 Nuremberg coach Hans Meyer was second with 221 votes after his club won the German Cup for the first time in 45 years by beating Stuttgart in the final.

The 2007-2008 Bundesliga season kicks off on Friday when Stuttgart play host to Schalke 04.

Rooney can

FROM PAGE 20 "But going through it, you learn a lot, not just about yourself but the players around you.

"I firmly believe we go into the next year in a stronger position than we were a year ago.

"There is a great determination amongst the players and staff to make sure we create a successful England team that qualifies for Euro 2008. The fans deserve it."



PHOTO: BFF ONLINE

Outing BFF general secretary Anwarul Haq Helal (R) receives a bouquet from his colleagues at the BFF Bhaban yesterday.

Tough for Freddie



BBC ONLINE, undated

Former Australia bowler Damien Fleming believes Andrew Flintoff faces a tough challenge to modify his bowling action.

Flintoff has asked England fast bowling adviser Allan Donald to help him straighten his left foot at the point of delivery to avoid further injuries.

But Fleming, who was forced to change his action because of injury, said the lower body is more difficult to alter.

"He needs to get his hips and knee straighter to the target, but it will be tough at 29," he told BBC Sport.

"Fast bowlers have a higher injury rate compared to other sports. I found when I was coaching (at Australia's centre of excellence in Adelaide) bowlers seem to be able to change their top half of their action easier than their bottom half."

Flintoff recently resumed playing after a third operation on his left ankle and has since been named in England's one-day and ICC World Twenty20 squads.

The all-rounder bowled three overs and took 1-24 in Lancashire's

eight-wicket defeat to Gloucestershire in the Twenty20 Cup semi-final at Edgbaston without apparent discomfort.

But Donald is concerned Flintoff's current action, where his front foot points inwards rather than straight towards the batsman, is placing excessive stress on the bone and muscle.

"It is not something that I am going to start working on modifying," said Donald. "It would have to be done in the close season. It is up to Freddie to decide."

Biomechanical research has shown that a fast bowler's leading leg will absorb a downward force equivalent to 10 times their body weight at the point of delivery.

Therefore any misalignment in a bowler's action will add extra pressure on to an already overworked front leg.

However Fleming warned any change in action could potentially negate Flintoff's main strengths.

"When you talk to batsmen they say his (Flintoff's) arms and legs fly everywhere, taking a lot of focus away from the ball," said Fleming, who took 75 wickets in 20 Test matches for Australia in a seven-year span.

"If his action gets streamlined too much, he may lose some of his main

weapons -- his unpredictability and extra bounce because of his high arm action.

"You tend to lose a lot of potency when you're injured and that's been the test for 'Freddie' over the last 12 to 18 months.

"However he could turn into a 'shock' bowler rather than the stock bowler he has been for the past few years."

Fleming's career was cut short by injury despite making significant modifications to his bowling action.

"I changed my action halfway through my career at 26," said Fleming, who is now working as a television commentator.

"I lost a fair bit of pace and bounce and had a lot of back knee collapse, so I had to straighten up my action a fair bit. It took me five to six months of the pre-season to do that."

"You start by running on a track and using straight lines to land your back and front feet in a straight line. It took a lot of repetition because I had trained myself with bad habits."

"So it was about training with the good habits and it took me a while to get used to it."

NSC accords reception to handball team

UNB, Dhaka

The National Sports Council (NSC) yesterday accorded reception to the Bangladesh Under-17 handball team who became runners up in the South Asian Handball Championship (U-17) in Islamabad last May.

Hosts Pakistan emerged champions in the four-team meet. Afghanistan and Nepal were the other two participating countries.

NSC secretary Aminul Islam Khan was the chief guest at the reception held at the NSC conference room and distributed certificates among the U-17 team members.

NSC and Bangladesh Handball Federation officials were also present.

Akhtar fined for leaving early

BBC ONLINE, undated

Pakistan superstar Shoaib Akhtar has been fined \$5,000 (around £2,500) for two breaches of discipline.

Pakistan Cricket Board chief executive Shafqat Nagmi revealed that Shoaib, 31, had left a training camp in Karachi without informing the team management.

Nagmi said: "He was also asked to appear before the disciplinary committee but he didn't show up."

Shoaib, who left the camp complaining of a neck strain, has been named in the squad for next month's World Twenty20.

Helal bids

FROM PAGE 17 Ashrafuddin Ahmed Chunnur resigned, the issue was discussed at the meeting before accepting Helal's resignation.

Different BFF members, however, informed that the two-minute long meeting was a formal farewell party for Helal.

"The BFF president himself took the decision. He told us that Helal's resignation has been accepted and there was no discussion," told joint-secretary Anwar Hossain Ujjal.

When asked whether Helal was asked to reconsider his decision, Sultan refused to make any comment.

PCB shifts

FROM PAGE 17 India finally broke the deadlock by playing a one-day in the port city in 2004 and then another match in Peshawar in 2006.

ITINERARY

Sep 25 -- South Africa team arrive in Karachi
Sep 27 -- Three-day match in Karachi

Oct 1-5 -- 1st Test in Karachi
Oct 8-12 -- 2nd Test in Lahore
Oct 18 -- 1st one-day international in Lahore

Oct 20 -- 2nd one-day international in Lahore
Oct 23 -- 3rd one-day international in Faisalabad

Oct 26 -- 4th one-day international in Multan
Oct 29 -- 5th one-day international in Karachi

UEFA Cup

FROM PAGE 20 Slaven Koprinica (CRO) v Galatasaray (TUR)
Leiria (POR) v Maccabi Netanya (ISR)
Hajduk Split (CRO) v Sampdoria (ITA)
Besa (ALB) v Litex Lovech (BUL)
Maccabi Tel-Aviv FC (ISR) v Kayseri Erciyesspor (TUR)
Atletico Madrid (ESP) v Vojvodina (SRB)
NK Siroki Brijeg (BIH) v Hapoel Tel-Aviv (ISR)
AC Omnia (CYP) v CSKA Sofia (BUL)
FC Basel (SUI) v Mattersburg (AUT)
Ried (AUT) v FC Sion (SUI)
FC MIKA (ARM) v FC Armedia Petrzalka (SVK)
FC Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk (UKR) v Belchator (POL)
Budapest Honved FC (HUN) v Hambourg (GER)
Young Boys Berne (SUI) v RC Lens (FRA)
Tobol Kostanay (KAZ) v Groclin Grodzisk Wielkopolski (POL)
Austria Vienne (AUT) v FK Jablonec (CZE)
Zlate Moravce (SVK) v Zenit St Petersburg (RUS)
Rapid Vienna (AUT) v Dinamo Tbilisi (GEO)
Mytilkosken Pallo-47 (FIN) v Blackburn Rovers (ENG)
Drogheda United FC (IRL) v Helsingborgs IF (SWE)
SK Liepajas Metalurgs (LAT) v Aik Solna (SWE)
HJK Helsinki (FIN) v Aalborg BK (DEN)
FK Ekranas (LTU) v Valerenga IF (NOR)
Dunfermline (SCO) v BK Hacken (SWE)
Brann (NOR) v FK Suduva (LTU)
FC Haka (FIN) v FC Midtjylland (DEN)
FC Dinamo Minsk (BLR) v Odense BK (DEN)
Kaerjeng 97 (LUX) v Standard de Liege (BEL)
Fredrikstad FK (NOR) v Hammarby (SWE)

1st leg: August 16
2nd leg: August 30

Taming of the Sree



CRICINFO, undated

Of the entire Indian squad that practised at The Oval on Tuesday just one, Sreesanth, had bad news waiting for him. Obliging a few autograph seekers in the boundary line, Sreesanth was jolted when a journalist informed him of his axing from the one-day side. Initially he thought it was a joke -- "Dropped for one-dayers and picked for Twenty20?" -- but his expression gradually turned morose.

It isn't a shocking omission by any means. Sreesanth hasn't been able to replicate his Test success in the one-day arena, picking up only 38 wickets in 29 games. But the implications of his losing a spot, the only change in India's one-day squad, are magnified several times when seen through the prism of a forgettable Test at Trent Bridge.

In the space of one afternoon, he bowled a ferocious beamer to Kevin Pietersen and liberal front-foot no-ball to Paul Collingwood, and shoulder-charged Michael Vaughan; for the last infringement he was docked 50% of his match fee.

On Tuesday, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, his captain for the Twenty20 World Championship, offered contradictory views on Sreesanth's beamer. He defended him, appreciating the apology, but sent out clear signals that he can't afford a repeat.

"He is a tough guy, he plays good aggressive cricket. Even I don't know if it (the beamer) was deliber-

ate or slipped out of his hands. For me that was a yorker (smiles). He's the only guy who knows. I'm glad he went and said sorry to Pietersen. But things like that should be avoided. If it was not intentional it was pretty accurate (smiles again). So it's better to avoid all this."

It's a statement that seems to reveal the team's mindset on Sreesanth: be aggressive but don't go overboard. "I think he has a great example in Zaheer," said Rahul Dravid at the end of the second Test. "Zaheer has been as aggressive as anyone, without going over the top -- just performing and getting wickets."

It is reliably learnt that Sreesanth was given a serious talking to at Leicester, during India's tour match against Sri Lanka A that he missed, and told to rein in his emotions. A member of the team felt he'd got the criticism he merited and hoped he would learn from the experience.

"We always do that (staying within the boundaries of fair play)," said Dhoni when asked if Rahul Dravid had chatted with the team regarding their on-field behaviour. "It is more about the individual rather than the captain. The captain can only tell you, the individual has to draw the line."

But there's a general belief, especially among the senior players, that Sreesanth is vital for his pace, the pressure he creates and the enthusiasm he brings to the bowling crease. There's also a feeling that he represents the aggressive face of the team and is someone who needs guidance rather than discouragement.

A barren spell



CRICINFO, undated

There was a time in Andrew Strauss's England career when he scored centuries for fun. A hundred on debut against New Zealand in 2004; hundreds on his first appearances against West Indies and South Africa, two more in his maiden Ashes summer a year later. After 30 Tests he had 10 to his name, as well as a brace in ODIs, and the record books had him bracketed alongside similarly speedy starters in Herbert Sutcliffe, Len Hutton and Wally Hammond. But 12 Tests down the line, Strauss's tally has resolutely refused to roll onwards. The momentum has deserted him, just as it seems to have deserted his team in this series.

In fact, it is a year ago to the day since Strauss last reached three figures in international cricket. That was at Headingley against Pakistan last August, when Strauss's role and reputation in the game was significantly different. He was captain of England back then -- albeit in a stand-in capacity for Michael Vaughan and Andrew Flintoff -- and an integral member of the limited-overs set-up. On Tuesday, however, it was confirmed he would be missing the Twenty20 World Championship in South Africa, as well as the seven-match one-day series against India. On Thursday Strauss begins his final international appearance of the summer, and it could hardly be a more crucial encounter.

England have not lost a home series since the Ashes summer of 2001, and a proud record is very much under threat against an Indian side that extracted extra motivation from the Jyeggata saga at Trent Bridge last week. "We don't want to lose the series," said Strauss. "We've played some good cricket and we don't feel we're a worse side than India, so we need to go out and prove that this week. That's a great motivating factor, but I don't think we're going to be short of motivation this week. We've got a lot of points to prove and we want to show the type of cricket we can play."

Few members of England's team

will have more to prove than the openers, who were comprehensively upstaged by their Indian counterparts at Trent Bridge. England may have been caught cold on a damp track in the first innings, but by the time Dinesh Karthik and Wasim Jaffer had added 147 for the first wicket in reply, the game was as good as won and lost. Strauss and his partner Alastair Cook have managed just four fifty-run stands in 25 attempts, with a best effort of 76 coming against a rusty Indian attack on the opening morning at Lord's. Not since Graham Gooch was briefly partnered by Tim Robinson in the mid-1980s have England had such slim pickings at the top.

"One of the reasons we haven't put on many partnerships is that I haven't been in great form," said a candid Strauss. "Clearly I haven't scored as many runs as I'd like to so it's been a difficult year, and a tough year in terms of the teams we've played. But Cooky and I get on exceptionally well off the pitch. We've put together a lot of 30,40,50 partnerships, so we are doing the hard work. There's no reason rationally why we can't go on and get big scores together."

Both men have had their technical shortcomings exposed this summer. Cook, who had his outside edge tormented by Brett Lee and Glenn McGrath in the winter, is now finding himself shuffling across his stumps and has fallen lbw four innings in a row, twice each to Zaheer Khan and Sourav Ganguly. Strauss meanwhile was one so adept at playing within his limitations -- nudging and pushing the full-length delivery, and pulling anything short -- but this summer he has found himself playing with unfamiliar aggression. His two best innings of the series ended in reckless fashions; a wild charge at Anil Kumble deprived him of a hundred at Lord's, and a loose slash at Zaheer Khan undermined England's second-innings revival at Trent Bridge.

"We've prided ourselves on playing positive cricket for the last five or six years, and it's worked very well for us," said Strauss. "Sometimes you don't get it right and you get out playing a big shot and look

That seems to be the thinking in the Indian team management as well regarding Sreesanth's participation in the Oval Test. Michael Atherton, the former England captain, had called for Sreesanth to be banned from the Test, starting on Thursday, but Dilip Vengsarkar, India's chairman of selectors, sounded optimistic when asked about Sreesanth's chances for the final Test.

The pitch, expected to assist bounce, will play a hand in India's selection. "There never is much lateral movement here and I wouldn't expect the swing seen earlier in the series," said Bill Gordon, the head groundsman. "There will be some turn and consistent bounce for the slow bowlers. It should be a sporting pitch with something for everyone."

Sreesanth is good at hitting the deck and, despite his erratic nature, can deliver the matchwinning spell. Neither Ranadeb Bose, the medium-pacer who picked up five-wickets in the tour game, nor Ramesh Powar, the offspinner who also had a good match at Leicester, have proven international records. Indications are that he's likely to make the team list on Thursday. Which Sreesanth lands up will be anyone's guess.

like an idiot, but you have to take that on the chin and realise that maybe the wicket wasn't suitable for that stroke. But I feel comfortable in my game. I haven't scored a hundred but 96 in a low-scoring game is worth more than a hundred on a flat pitch. To contribute to the team I need to score runs consistently and I feel I'm just starting to do that again."

Strauss's struggles were largely forgotten in the furore that followed the Trent Bridge defeat, with fingers being pointed hither and thither about England's infantile on-field attitude. "We've seen (the story) do the rounds and we are trying to move on from it," said Strauss, who had been England's leader in the field at the moment the jelly bean saga erupted.

England have closed ranks on the subject this week, and the official team line is now that the sweets were left on the pitch at the drinks break. "It was a situation that came about through a misunderstanding, which probably inflamed it more than it merited," Strauss said. "But the umpires felt it could develop into something nasty and from my point of view I had to tell the guys to calm it down and concentrate on our cricket."

"We've tried not to pay too much attention to it," he added. "These things can become distractions that prevent you playing your best cricket. At the same time, the fact that there's been such a strong reaction means we need to look at how we play our cricket and make sure we're not overstepping any marks. We all recognise that in international cricket it's important we play with intensity and with controlled aggression, but there's also a line there and we have that responsibility not to cross that line."

Come Thursday morning, the only line that Strauss will be concerned about crossing is the one that makes the difference between victory and defeat. He has just two innings left this season to haul himself -- and his side -- out of an unanticipated slump.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS		39	Parasitic worm	2	Nolo	26	Read bar codes
1	Pump up the volume	41	Auto style	3	Nuisance	27	Guru's exercises
4	Bloke	43	Highland hillside	4	Epidemic illness	28	Light applications
8	Hit hard	44	Vast	5	Owms	29	Gilligan's home
12	Spell-down	46	Investigate	6	Illustrations	30	Supplemented, with "out"
13	Tortoise's rival	50	French cardinal	7	Graceful woman	31	Barber's concern
14	Addict	55	Crony	8	Paill	35	Shoulder blade
15	Type units	56	Rue the run	9	Blond shade	38	One of Santa's team
16	Those who refuse to face problems	57	Young	10	Witness	40	That girl
18	Bottom line	58	Donkey	11	Day fractions (Abbr.)	42	Born
20	Squid squirt	59	Nobility	17	Hostel	45	—
21	Mother of Castor and Pollux	60	Almo-	19	Elev.	47	Romeo
24	Informative	61	Appomat-tox VIP	22	Gossip	48	October birthstone
28	"The Blue Angel" star	23	Tart in tone	25	"Now then, where --?"	49	Otherwise
32	Burrito's cousin	25	"Now then, where --?"			50	Knock
33	Request					51	Lemieux milieu
34	Neighbor-hoods					52	Ernesto Guevara
36	Droop					53	Debtor's letters
37	Evil					54	Good hearing

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CRYPTOQUIP
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E U F N A U O R C L W G X S N E W M V W E
E G L T G L T R U C F G T S W E M R
R U C A N X W N O U C W M W C L N .
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN A MAN'S NEATLY GROOMED HAIR GETS ALL MUSSUED UP, YOU MIGHT SAY HE'S NOW DE-PARTED.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R equals Y