

## Prarthana clinch U-14 title

SPORTS REPORTER

Indian Prarthana Thombare clinched the girls' singles title of the Prime Bank ATF Under-14 Tennis Tournament with an impressive 6-2, 6-0 victory over compatriot Riddhi Hegde at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday.

In the all-India boys' semifinals, Mohit Mayur beat Rohit Bisht 6-3, 6-0 and Ronit Bisht defeated Rakshay Thakkar 6-2, 7-5 to reach the final.

The boys' singles and doubles and the girls' doubles finals will be held today, the closing day of the meet.

## CSA promised full security

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan on Saturday assured a South African delegation it would provide full security during their cricket team's tour of the country starting later this month.

South Africa are due to play two Tests and five one-day internationals in a month-long stay in the violence-hit country. They will open the tour with a warm-up three-day match in Karachi from September 27.

Security fears have surged in Pakistan after a spate of militant violence, including more than two-dozen suicide attacks in the past two months. Around 270 people, most of them security officials, have been killed in these attacks.

The country's military ruler Pervez Musharraf is also struggling to keep his hold on power amid a deepening political crisis.

The home secretary of Sindh province Saturday briefed a two-member delegation from the Cricket South Africa (CSA) on the security situation in provincial capital Karachi, officials said.

"I have no doubts that Pakistan will provide us with the needed security and, God willing, everything will be alright," head of the delegation Goolam Raja told reporters.

Raja and CSA member Sean Gallaher are touring Pakistan to assess security arrangements.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has changed the venues of two one-day matches against South Africa from Peshawar and Rawalpindi to Lahore and Karachi. But it denied the CSA had asked it to do so for security reasons.

Peshawar has been an unacceptable venue for foreign teams because of its close proximity to the war-ravaged Afghanistan.

Raja said a final report on security would be submitted to the CSA.

"It is difficult to say about our final assessments now but we will submit a report to CSA and hope everything will be in place for the tour," said Raja.

Australia's A team are currently touring Pakistan and have faced no security problems.

But security fears and political instability forced the International Hockey Federation to move the annual Champions Trophy tournament from Lahore where it was due to be held in December.

PCB director operations Zakir Khan said he was confident that decision would not affect the cricket tour.

"A professional security plan has been put in place for the South Africans and they were briefed. We hope everything will take place accordingly and we hope to have a good cricket series," said Khan.

The first of two Tests starts here from October 1 and will be followed by the second Test in Lahore and the five one-day matches.

## Heavy penalty

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Vietnam won 1-0.

Six other players, including a 22-year-old star striker Pham Van Quyen, are now serving suspended terms.

Football betting and other forms of gambling, and match fixing, are illegal but widespread in the communist nation where police and the VFF's officials are trying to clean up Vietnamese football.

In July, nine Vietnamese referees and football officials were given jail terms of up to seven years after being found guilty of taking and giving bribes to fix matches in Vietnam's domestic V-League season 2004-2005.

## PCB announces

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can be obtained for a fees. The six teams will also be franchised by corporate," he said.

Ashraf said the Premier league would be managed by former Pakistani players and the eventual idea was to allow players to benefit monetarily.

He denied the Indians had launched the Champions League concept and its franchised versions to counter a looming threat from the rebel Indian Cricket League launched by the Essel group in India.

"No this concept of the Champions League franchise was in the pipeline by the Indian Board for the last one year and was discussed by the participating boards. It will be an official event and it will allow players to play for their countries as well as earn from playing 11 the Twenty20 leagues," he added.



PHOTO: TIGERCRICKET.COM

Bangladesh women's national cricket team players jog during a training session at the Ansar & VDP Academy in Shafipur. The training camp that began on September 8 will conclude on September 21.

# Colly owns up to defeat

BBC ONLINE, undated



England captain Paul Collingwood turned his attentions to South Africa after admitting they were roundly outplayed by Australia in Cape Town on Friday.

England were thrashed by eight wickets in the World Twenty20 but have still qualified for the Super Eight phase.

"Come Sunday the boys will be pumped up and raring to go," said Collingwood.

"We hold our hands up and say we were outplayed by Australia. We know we have to improve but we can do that, we have players who can win games for England."

After being bowled out for 135 -- their lowest Twenty20 score -- in their 20 overs, England were helpless to prevent Australia winning with more than five overs to spare.

Collingwood added: "The better side won. It was a disappointing performance but we are through so it gives us a chance to.

"We can play better than that, we realise that, but we're still learning.

"We didn't get enough runs on the board and if we're going to progress in this I think we're going to have to be a little bit braver in our strokeplay.

"Quite a lot of batsmen got in and didn't go on to make that big total.

"It was always going to be hard to defend a total like that on a pitch like that against a side like Australia who played fantastically well."

England, having beaten Zimbabwe on Thursday, qualified from their group in second place and now move into the Super Eight phase with a pool comprising South Africa, New Zealand and one other.

Counterpart Ricky Ponting was pleased to quickly cast aside the embarrassment of defeat against Zimbabwe.

"We're a fair bit happier than we were a couple of days ago," he said.

"We knew that we had some better cricket in us than we had the other day and it was a pretty comprehensive win.

"We bowled pretty well and did the job with the bat so it was pretty satisfy-

ing.

"The bowling group was where the game was won, we fielded well and took our chances and took our chances with the bat as well. Gilly and Matty were very good."

Ponting added that Kevin Pietersen's comments on Thursday acted as extra motivation for his side.

Pietersen initially said it would be "nice to send Australia home early," before attempting to play down the severity of his remarks.

"A lot of the guys in this side have been playing cricket a long time and unless you can back up comments they don't mean anything," Ponting said.

"They had their chance to do what he (Pietersen) said they wanted to do, which was to try to humiliate us, and if anything they were the ones who walked off humiliated."

Collingwood was a paragon of diplomacy and said: "Kevin's obviously Kevin. We just wanted to go and win the game."

## Powell's missed chance

AFP, Brussels

Jamaican Asafa Powell remained upbeat after unfavourable conditions compromised his bid to break his world 100 metres record at the fifth leg of the Golden League meeting here on Friday.

Powell posted a winning time of 9.84sec to finish ahead of Norwegian Jaysuma Saïdy Ndure and Jamaican Michael Frater, the field racing in a headwind of 0.3 m/s in temperatures of 17 degrees celsius.

Powell had set a new 100m world record of 9.74sec in Italy last Sunday and said he could go faster, possibly as fast 9.68sec.

But the combination of a false start, and the unfavourable conditions conspired against him.

"I was unsettled by the false start, and the weather really wasn't very favourable. Given the circumstances 9.84sec is a great time," said Powell.

American sprinter Sanya Richards clocked a world's best this year of 49.29secs on her way to victory in the 400 metres and improving her previous best of 49:36.

"I'm going to have to recover well because Berlin (the last round of the Golden League) is on Sunday. That won't be easy because the season has been long," said Richards.

Victories by Richards and Russian pole vaulter Yelena Isinbayeva kept the pair on course for a share of the Golden League's million dollar jackpot, for which they will have to compete in the Stuttgart finals on September 22 and 23.

Isinbayeva is the only other athlete who remains unbeaten in the Golden League this year.

The Russian won with a modest effort, by her standards, of 4.80m to defeat her compatriot Svetlana Feofanova.

## Award for Sven

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was taking someone's place that is a really great player so he was under pressure but he performed fantastically."

Norwegian striker John Carew is O'Neill's main injury concern after returning from international duty with a groin problem but defender Curtis Davies should make his debut after arriving on loan from West Bromwich Albion.

## Scolari's job

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inquiry into the incident which will meet on Wednesday.

According to television footage shown on Portuguese television Scolari appears to punch the Serbian defender Ivica Dragutinovic towards the end of Wednesday night's 1-1 Group draw that saw Dragutinovic dismissed.

After initially denying the assault Scolari later apologised to his players, the country and the football authorities but not to Dragutinovic.

## Quitting when ahead

IAN CHAPPELL

If you give the captaincy your all, there is a definite use-by date. Rahul Dravid, an intense and thoughtful individual, has obviously reached the end of the line as captain.

As is the case with retirement for a regular player, for a captain it is better to resign when people are asking, "Why did you?" rather than "Why don't you?" Dravid certainly achieved that aim, having just completed a memorable Test series win over England and then pushing the hosts to the limit in the seven-match one-day international series.

Many people will wonder why Dravid has resigned from the most prestigious sporting job in India after only two years. I'm not surprised, because Dravid is the kind of person who puts his heart and soul into any job he tackles. When you do that, especially in a country where a billion people all think they can do the job better or at least as well, it can wear you down mentally.

Dravid is a man of great integrity and if he feels he's no longer capable of doing the job to his satisfaction and in a manner that will serve India best, he is not going to keep doing it for any kudos that may come his way. He won't be remembered as the best Indian captain but he'll be recalled as one who left the job with his dignity intact.

He was a solid captain, and there were times when he threatened to be an aggressive captain with oodles of flair, but in the end there was always the feeling that the extra pressure that comes with being Indian captain generally stifled those urges. It may also have been that captaining a side containing one superstar and a number of high-profile players wasn't conducive to Dravid always doing what his instincts told him was best to claim victory. Dravid is a strong and honest character but he is more inclined towards consensus than confrontation.

Because there is no obvious successor, the selectors may think about splitting the captaincy as a short-term solution. On that basis VVS Laxman would make a good Test captain; it may just be the confidence boost his batting needs, and it would give the selectors time to find a long-term, full-time captain. Mahendra Singh Dhoni has been earmarked for future leadership and the one-day captaincy would be a good way to test his mettle.

In September 1975, I resigned from the Australian captaincy after four years in the job, feeling a sense of satisfaction and relief. In the modern game with all the extra matches and duties, two years of Indian captaincy is the equivalent of four in the Australian job. I empathise with Dravid's decision and think he has made the correct call.

(Australia great Ian Chappell wrote this article on Cricinfo.com).

## Jayasuriya jolts

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Fall of wickets: 1-22, 2-25, 3-95, 4-97, 5-102, 6-153, 7-164.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Vaas	4	0	27	0
Fernando	4	0	30	2
Jayasuriya	4	0	25	1
Vijekoon	4	0	50	1
Malinga	4	0	29	1

SRI LANKA				
Tharanga c Martin b Vettori	37			
Jayasuriya c Fulton b Vettori	61			
Sangakkara c Taylor b Styris	14			
Jayawardene not out	35			
Silva not out	9			
Extras: (b-3, lb-8, w-1)	12			

Total: (For three wkts in 18.5 overs)

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Bond	4	0	45	0
Martin	3	0	23	0
Gillespie	2.5	0	29	0
Vettori	4	0	23	2
Styris	3	0	16	1
Oram	2	0	21	0

Result: Sri Lanka won by seven wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Sanath Jayasuriya.

Toss: New Zealand  
Umpires: Daryl Harper (AUS) and Mark Benson (ENG)  
Third umpire: Nigel Llong (ENG)  
Match referee: Chris Broad (ENG)

## Academy sees

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As per planning the two-storied building for the academy in Mirpur, the home of Bangladesh cricket, will provide all the necessary facilities to run the development activities smoothly, something that has been stagnant for long.

BCB signed a five-year sponsorship deal with leading mobile operator GrameenPhone on March 13 for the academy but six months on, nothing has transformed in this very important task till today in terms of translating the dream into reality.

The academy is operating from a rented house at the moment and the board are spending a huge amount of money for all the activities but the problem is that it can hardly fulfil the demand.

# After Dravid who?



Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Till September 14, Indian cricket was in search of a coach. Now, the appointment of the coach is a distant second with the quest to find a successor to Rahul Dravid becoming the burning concern. With a seven-ODI series against Australia beginning in just over a fortnight, there isn't much time. What's more worrying, though, is that there aren't too many obvious candidates either.

The first question the selectors have to answer is whether they want to look forward or back. If they choose to look forward then Mahendra Singh Dhoni is the front-runner by some way. But, that wouldn't just be looking forward, it would be fast-tracking someone who may or may not be ready for the job just yet. Dhoni has been handed the captaincy for the ICC World Twenty20, but no one knows yet what his approach will be, what kind of captain he'd make or if he'd even be any good at it. Sure, Dhoni is someone being looked at in a captaincy role, but there was no chance he'd be handed the job just now, till Dravid made his decision to quit.

The most serious and immediate concern over appointing Dhoni captain is one of workload. Will wicketkeeping and leading the team be too much to handle? With Dinesh Karthik in the mix, will Dhoni give up the gloves, lead the team, and play as a pure batsman? At the moment Dhoni doesn't quite cut it as a No. 5 batsman in Tests. And, if the big gloves are taken away from him, and his primary responsibility withdrawn, he won't enjoy the same insurance against poor form that he does now. A couple of low scores and the pressure will be on him.

The second thing the selectors will have to ponder when short-listing Dhoni for the job is the fact

that the Indian captaincy is different from any other. It's not merely calling right at the toss, helping select teams or setting fields. If anything, that's the easy part. Those internal pressures are something Dhoni will be able to handle, being the sensible and level-headed cricketer that he is. It's what comes from outside that pose the biggest challenge. The expectations of a nation, the ire of fickle fans who have already defaced Dhoni's house once for no fault of his, the ever-present attention of a demanding media, the constant cajoling and confrontation with various sections of the board to get things done ... How well would Dhoni cope? Someone like Dravid didn't think it was worth it beyond a point.

If the selectors choose to look back, then there are two serious options in Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly, the first of whom relinquished the captaincy, and the second had it taken away because his batting went to pieces. Whether either wants it back, no-one is sure, but the whispers have never been too far away. At one point in the not-so-distant past, Tendulkar was appointed vice-captain, and reportedly gave some decision makers the impression that he would not be "averse to the idea" if he was offered the captaincy. Since then, though, he has said more than once that it is not a job he has coveted.

Ganguly knows better than anyone in the running what the stresses of captaincy can do to a cricketer. And he knows how much it can take out of a person. After a spell out of the team that involved much heartburn he's now settled back into the groove, and is batting as well as he has in a long time. In England he was more assured at the crease than some of his more technically accomplished colleagues. With sheer determination and grit Ganguly has overcome more obstacles, and spent more time at the crease, than many of his

detractors thought possible. Would he want to risk throwing that all away, taking up the captaincy again?

Beyond these three, there are no real candidates. Yuvraj Singh was once vice-captain and supposedly being groomed for the role but he can't find a place in the Test side. VVS Laxman has plenty of leadership experience but there's no place for him in the one-day team. Virender Sehwag, another one spoken of as a possible inheritor of Ganguly's mantle can't find a place in either team at the moment.

Will the selectors go long-term? Will they only appoint someone for the home one-dayers against Australia and worry about the Tests later? Will they split the captaincy? Dilip Vengsarkar, who said he was in a meeting when contacted soon after Dravid's decision was made public, did not want to comment. And, given some of the choices his committee has made in the recent past, and some of the statements he has made in interviews recently, that might just be the best way forward till September 18, when a successor to Dravid is appointed.

## China appoint

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who is coach of the Olympic team and who recommended his former Belgrade Red Star teammate to the China Football Association.

"This is a highlight of my career as the coach of Chinese national team," Petrovic said.

"I'm looking forward to working with Djukovic to form up the national team." His main task is to revive a squad in disarray following its Asian Cup disappointment and guide it through qualifying for the World Cup in South Africa.

Recent reports said the association wanted to hire the highly regarded Djukovic to guide both the Olympic and full national sides, but that he had resisted in order to stay focused on preparing his team for the 2008 Beijing Games.

# Arsenal go atop

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for long periods.

But with seven minutes left Nemanja Vidic got his head to a near post corner from new signing Nani to clinch all three points.

Cristiano Ronaldo, who was back in the side after serving a three-match suspension for head-butting Portsmouth's Richard Hughes last month, marked his return by collecting a yellow card for diving.

Liverpool boss Rafael Benitez's fears that, at the end of a gruelling international week, his players could struggle in a lunchtime kick-off at Portsmouth proved well-founded.

A lacklustre Liverpool rarely threatened and had Jose Reina to thank for their point, the Spanish goalkeeper saving a first-half penalty from Nigerian playmaker Nwankwo Kanu.

In the post-match Benitez insisted he was right to leave out Liverpool's big guns.

The Spaniard left Steven Gerrard, Fernando Torres and Ryan Babel on the bench until the second half at Fratton Park and Liverpool struggled to find their rhythm as a result.

It took Jose Reina's penalty save from Nwankwo Kanu to save a point for Liverpool, but Benitez was adamant he was right to make

changes with a Champions League trip to Porto coming up on Tuesday.

"I think in the first half we were better than them. That means the players were doing a good job," Benitez said.

"Torres, Gerrard and Babel were creating chances when they came on. That was my idea.

"We made chances with some good counter attacks. In the first half we were controlling the game and passing the ball well.

"They had one or two clear chances from some mistakes but not in open play.

"I don't know if that is a penalty in England. Maybe it is, I can't complain." chance over the bar.

# Brazil thrash China

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A resurgent Australia, who won their first World Cup match after 12 years of trying in their opener against Ghana, top the group with four points, ahead of Norway on goal difference.

With Norway expected to beat Ghana on Wednesday, Australia and Canada will have a crunch match for second place.

Canada's Christine Sinclair scored twice as they ended Ghana's dream.

The first goal came with a superb header from Sinclair in the 16th minute.

After the break Canada tightened control and midfielder Sophie Schmidt widened their lead after 55 minutes.

Sinclair blasted home her second in the 62nd minute to

become Canada's top World Cup scorer with five goals while Martina Franko got the fourth from close range.

Even Pellerud, who was Norway's coach when they won the World Cup, said it looked like his team had beaten their big weakness -- running out of steam in the second half.

"It was a good fitness test and I think we did well today," he said, adding that he expected no favours from Australia on Wednesday in Chengdu.

"We have played several games against Australia before. They are always very even," he said. "It is going to be the same again, very even."

Denmark beat a determined but outclassed New Zealand 2-0 to keep alive their slim hopes of

advancing to the knockout stage.

Captain Katrine Pedersen found the back of the net first on a well struck free kick in the 61st minute and they rammed home their advantage five minutes when Cathrine Paaske Sorensen snapped a header home.

Anne Dot Eggers Nielsen was instrumental in her duties as midfield general for Denmark but the veteran of 112 international caps warned they would not beat Brazil in their final group game unless they picked up their intensity.

"I don't think we can win against Brazil with this play," said Nielsen.

"We didn't think too much today. I don't know if it was because we were tired, but we have to think about football if we're going to win against Brazil."

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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