



England players enjoy a game of rugby during a training session on the eve of the first one-day international at the Dambulla International Stadium on Sunday.

## Matuail notches easy win

SPORTS REPORTER

Bokul slammed a hattrick as Matuail notched up a 3-0 victory over Spandan in the Third Division Football Super League at the Bir Shreshtha Shaheed Sepoy Mohammad Mostafa Stadium at Kamalapur yesterday.

Bokul scored in the 45th, 76th and 79th minute respectively.

In the day's other match at the same venue, Uro Famous Club edged past Lalbagh SC by a lone goal, scored by Akbar in the 15th minute.

## Henry hits

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stump, crashing to their third successive league defeat with a 2-0 reverse at Real Zaragoza on Saturday.

Argentine Andres D'Alessandro broke the deadlock on 53 minutes and Sergio Garcia struck late on to condemn Sevilla to a fourth straight defeat in all competitions.

"There is a long way to go yet and other teams have been in this situation before," said Sevilla forward Frederic Kanoute.

"Real Madrid were in a similar situation and ended up winning the league last year."

After winning their first two league matches Sevilla have lost 3-0 at Arsenal in the Champions League and have consequently fallen against Barcelona, Espanyol and now Zaragoza.

The UEFA Cup holders are now eight points behind leaders Barcelona and need to regroup for Slavia Prague in the Champions League on Tuesday.

## BCB sets

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a short time to start the work of our academy," he informed.

Talks will also be held on age-level cricket, with the members deciding in principle to arrange a two-day semifinal and three-day final in the age-group competitions.

They will also arrange a special clinic for these young cricketers, in former international cricketers like Arjuna Ranatunga, Romesh Kaluwitharana, Aquib Javed and Iqbal Sikander.

The Shaan Williams issue also came under discussion.

"We will consider him (Shaun Williams) as an A team and Academy coach but definitely not as an interim national coach," Ishraq said.

He was given the responsibility to form a committee to have a look at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

## Change

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and is consistent."

That is nearly that. To the ingredients of new eras, new names and spin, must be added the weather, hopefully combining to produce a coker. Smith said that temperatures in the high thirties would play a role at some stage.

"It's very hot and there isn't much of a breeze in the middle, but we have to manage that as best we can."

## TEAMS

PAKISTAN (probable): Salman Butt, Mohammad Hafeez, Younis Khan, Mohammad Yousuf, Shoaib Malik (captain), Misbahul Haq, Kamran Akmal, Abdur Rehman, Umar Gul, Danish Kaneria, Mohammad Asif.

SOUTH AFRICA (probable): Graeme Smith (captain), Herschelle Gibbs, Jacques Kallis, Hashim Amla, Ashwell Prince, AB de Villiers, Mark Boucher, Andre Nel, Makhaya Ntini, Dale Steyn, Paul Harris.

## No Freddie amuses Mahela

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Sri Lankan captain Mahela Jayawardene has said that his side will look to capitalise on Andrew Flintoff's absence when they take on England in the five-match one-day series starting at the Rangiri Dambulla Stadium on October 1.

Flintoff was forced to pull out of the series due to a troublesome left ankle. He also missed the last bilateral one-day series between the two teams in 2006 where England were walloped 5-0 at home.

"Andrew is a top-class allrounder," Jayawardene told The Nation, a Colombo-based daily. "England have a more balanced attack with him in their side because he is a batting allrounder who bowls really well. He is a matchwinner and his absence is obviously an advantage for us."

Jayawardene indicated that the

England one-day side was stronger than the one they faced last year. "They have got some really good allrounders coming through," he said. "We met them in the World Cup and it was a very close game. England will be a good challenge for us. It's a big season ahead and we need to make sure we start on a very good note."

"They also have some quality batsmen who play different roles, some we haven't seen. We need to understand what those are and try to counter-attack them."

Commenting on the Sri Lankan squad, Jayawardene said it was a tough call for the selectors to pick allrounder Kaushal Lokuarachchi ahead of fellow legspinner Malinga Bandara.

"Loku's been performing really well in one-day internationals. We know what Bandara is capable of doing. Thinking of the future, you never know how long Sanath Jayasuriya is going to continue playing. We might have to fit in a

spinning allrounder in the middle of our batting line-up. It's good for us to try a few things right now, see what Loku has to offer and how we can have different combinations going forward."

On Mutthia Muralidaran, Jayawardene doubted whether he would be fit for the series. Muralidaran is recovering from a strained right bicep which he sustained while bowling long spells during his county stint with Lancashire.

"It's good to have Murali around but the reality is that he won't be around for a long time. He won't be playing all the matches. We need to give him adequate rest. Even the workload on (Chaminda) Vaas must be limited. When opportunities arise we have to try out new blood. There are a few guys we have earmarked. We will then bring slowly into the system."

Chamika Welegedara, Mahela Udawatte and Dilruwan Perera are some of the players in the shortlist.

## Clarke feels 'at home'

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

said played "brilliantly" -- and kept the run rate at above five all through their fifth-wicket stand of 144. And all this without a chance of a wicket or a whiff of frustration.

He reached his century with a pull over deep midwicket off a Ramesh Powar lollipop, then raised his arms and soaked in the moment. He'd been here, done this in Test cricket. "It's obviously a great place to come back to after making my debut in Test cricket. It's disappointing we didn't get a result tonight but good to score a hundred."

All this while India watched the advantage -- gained with four early wickets -- slipping away from them. It was a familiar one-day of failing to go for the kill.

Sreesanth, after his very impressive first spell, couldn't deliver at the death, while RP Singh and Irfan Pathan looked pedestrian, pitching the ball all over the place. There was no semblance of the discipline that marked their bowling in the

process, at 137 and 243.

Rain robbed this match of a result but there was still time for Clarke, possibly a future leader of the team, to deliver a statement of intent. India will need to find one of their own in Kochi.



Action from yesterday's Araf Apparel 21st National Youth Hockey Championship match between Panchagarh and Sylhet at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium.



Double Olympic champion Haile Gebrselassie of Ethiopia is joyous as he crosses the finish line of the 34th Berlin Marathon yesterday. He set the world record with a time of 2 hours 4 minutes and 26 seconds.

## Anand clinches world chess title

AFP, Mexico City

India's Vishwanathan Anand was crowned world champion of chess Saturday as he won the marathon tournament in Mexico City that brought together eight of the game's best players.

Known as the "Tiger from Madras", Anand, 37, replaced Vladimir Kramnik of Russia as champion, winning the tournament on points after tying a match with Hungarian Peter Leko on the 14th day of the contest, which he dominated from the start.

"I enjoy this new feeling of being world champion," he told AFP.

"I had a couple of difficult games, nothing too worrying for this kind of tournament," said Anand, who was ranked world number one going into the tournament.

Kramnik, who saw the championship slip from his grasp on Friday after a tie, finished in second followed by Israeli Boris Gelfand.

Eight of the world's top chess brains met in Mexico for the competition. Prominent players such as the world number two, Veselin Topalov of Bulgaria, did not make it through the championship's complex qualification process.

Anand played at a clearly superior level throughout the 17-day tournament but came close to defeat on Friday. He managed to tie his five-hour, 73-move game with another Russian, Alexander Grischuk.

He would have won the tournament immediately if he had beaten Grischuk, who has been focusing on a poker career.

The Indian, who learned to play chess at the age of six, had previously won the world championship in 2000, but the achievement was valued less since at the time the chess world was split between two rival world titles.

Anand said both victories were equally sweet. "For me it is not different or more important than the 2000 title, for me they are both lovely memories," he said Saturday.

Anand distinguished himself as a youth for his chess acumen. At the age of 13, he won the junior title in India, and at 16, the senior chess title.

As champion he gets a prize of \$90,000 dollars, while the runner-up will go home with \$60,000 dollars and third place gets \$18,000.

Anand may have to fend off a tough challenge to his newly-won title next year from Kramnik in a duel of the 2006 and 2007 champions.

He said he planned to keep a light playing schedule for the rest of the year but anticipated tough matches upon his return.

"I am waiting for Sreesanth's confirmation. The film is in the preliminary stages. I had met him after his return from South Africa. The story was also read to him," the debutante director said.

"I hope to start the shooting once I get confirmation from Sreesanth. I know he is very busy. Lots of cricket is coming after the current Future Cup one-day series against Australia," Abu, who is currently working as an assistant to renowned Malayalam film Director Kamal, added.

The work on the script is in the

## Kumble for Test job

Cricket

PETER ROEBUCK

Anil Kumble is the best man to lead the Indian Test team on its forthcoming expedition to Australia. He could forge a strong alliance with Mahendra Singh Dhoni, the obvious man for the T20 and ODI teams down under.

Between them these sturdy cricketers have the qualities needed to coax fine performances from veterans and to instil confidence in youth. Probably it won't happen because selectors and officials are otherwise inclined but it'd be worth a go.

More likely a more fashionable player will be given a second or third tilt at the post.

Almost alone amongst the senior men, Kumble has not been given a chance to take charge of the Indian team. Over the last few years he has been the most constant, most probing of the Indian players yet he is seldom mentioned as a contender for the captaincy.

Instead he has served with unstinting effort. Always he has put the team first.

His loyalty is to India and his comrades, and his own interests are pushed to the back of his mind, an uncommon occurrence

amongst cricketers.

From time to time he may have been beaten but he has never been broken. Kumble has set a towering example. Neither the glamour nor clamour of the age has distracted him from his task.

Captains scanning the field in search of someone still wanting to bowl with the sun scorching, the batsmen dominating and the scoreboard rattling, need not look past him.

Others might appear discouraged but Kumble would stride to the crease, his hope intact, his intentions plain.

Nor does he hate a fieldsman after a catch had been dropped, or not for long anyhow (for he is only human). He can glare but he forgives readily and then tries to make amends. His appetite for wickets has never been sated. Are not these exceptional qualities? Here is an underestimated man.

As a cricketer, Kumble has surpassed expectations. It might be the same as a tactician and leader. On the rare occasions this unsmiling tweaker has directed operations he has shown the sort of flexibility and aggression supposedly absent in contemplative types.

But then Kumble merely resembles a librarian. At heart he is a lion. And he can still roar, continues to take wickets and has even scored

his first Test century, an innings that reminded observers that he had started as a batsman.

Certainly he has a couple more years left in him in Test cricket. Moreover he does not expect to play in the one-day matches and is therefore perfectly placed to form a partnership with Dhoni, a young cricketer with plenty on his plate.

Phonu was superb in South Africa and is clearly capable of inspiring younger players. That does not mean he ought forthwith to be put in charge of a successful Test side full of older hands. Nor does success in T20 necessarily mean that the same players will prosper in the Test arena. Indeed Yuvraj, the most explosive batsmen in the tournament, has been exposed in Tests as a batsman with a dubious backfoot game.

Dhoni can take charge of the Test team in two years, when his protégés, including the splendidly fertile Gautam Gambhir, Uthappa, Chawla and those contrasting pacemen, RP Singh and Sreesanth (the ice and the fire), are ready to replace the fading champions.

Till then it'd be wise to let him work on his own game whilst widening his experience of captaincy in one-day matches. Let us not kill the golden goose after a single egg has been laid.

## Sreesanth lands film offer

Cricket

PTI, Kochi

final stages, he revealed, adding that the dialogues in the film will be written by his friend Bipin Chandran.

Abu said Sreesanth's role would be more than just a cameo.

"It will not be a guest role, but certainly an important role, which will have its influence on the story," he added.

He said Mamooty would play a Police Officer. Among other major actors, who are expected to be included are Kalabhavan Mani, Indrajit and Innocent, he said.

"I was planning to make the official announcement after October 1, after getting confirmation and dates from both Mamooty and Sreesanth," he said.

"Once I get the confirmation, I hope to start the work from next year," he added.

Sreesanth's family, however, has refused to say anything on the matter.

"Sreesanth is concentrating on the one-day series," a family member said.

Sreesanth has had his brush with the entertainment industry when he penned a song 'Fago India', which was sung by his



Action from yesterday's Araf Apparel 21st National Youth Hockey Championship match between Panchagarh and Sylhet at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium.

## Hamilton closer

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see that it's very hard to recover six points per race," said Alonso.

"It means winning the two remaining races and expecting him to finish fifth or sixth, so realistically it's very complicated and we'll need a retirement from him and he hasn't had any this year, but maybe it will come in the last two races."

It was the first time since Brazil in 2003 that a race had to be started under the safety car because of the atrocious conditions, with heavy rain hitting the track and Mount Fuji covered in fog.

"Don't ask me how proud I am, words can't describe," said the breathless new world record holder who picks up the \$50,000 winner's cheque on top of his \$250,000 fee for competing. "It's something really special."

"I just want to thank all the German people who helped me on the course, their support made a huge difference. There were perfect conditions out there, it was a bit windy, but otherwise perfect."

"I had said I wanted to do 2 hours 3 minutes, but that didn't happen."

"This was Gebreselassie's second consecutive win in Berlin since he quit track racing after the 2004 Olympics to concentrate on the marathon."