

Sehwag hopes to do well

PTI, Ahmedabad

Flamboyant opener Virender Sehwag, who has been selected to the national ODI team against Pakistan, today said he was happy to get back into the side and hoped to repeat his past performance against Pakistan.

"I was hopeful that my name would come up because in the past I had done well against Pakistan," he said, adding that, "I am hopeful of repeating my performance in the coming series."

When asked by reporters whether he felt bad for Rahul Dravid, he said Dravid is a great player and has scored over 10,000 runs in one-day internationals. "Therefore I feel bad for him but it all depends on the selectors."

He said, "I was expecting a call against the Australians but as I was injured then, so I expected to be recalled against Pakistan." About his personal fitness, Sehwag said fitness drills have benefited him a lot. "I have lost weight and my fielding and running between the wickets have improved."

On the Pakistan series, he said it would be a tough one. "They are a good, tough and a young side. They have bowlers like Shaib, Asif and Umar Gul who have been playing well in the last two to three years and it is not easy to play against quality fast bowling." He said that he would play "in whatever position my captain wants me to bat," when pointed out that there were other openers like Sourav Ganguly, Robin Uthappa and Sachin Tendulkar in the side.

About his batting, he said "I am very confident, I have got runs today." Asked about the captaincy of Mahendra Singh Dhoni, he said Dhoni was a good future captain and his mind works fast on the field.

Warne ready to relinquish feat

AFP, Hong Kong

Test cricket's top wicket-taker Shane Warne said Sunday he will have no regrets when rival spin wizard Muttiah Muralidaran overtakes him at the top of the charts.

Murali is currently on Sri Lanka's tour of Australia and is just nine short of breaking Warne's record 708 Test wickets.

"Good luck to Murali, the record doesn't really worry me," said Warne, who has retired from Test cricket but is in Hong Kong playing quickfire six-a-side cricket.

"It has been nice to hold the record for three or four years. I always played my style of cricket and the wickets were nice, but it is more about the spirit in which you play the game."

"I'd like to think I have been an entertainer in the 16 years or so I've been playing. I hope my legacy is that I've never given up, have always been competitive, and that people have enjoyed that. So the record is not the most important thing."

"But," Warne added, "hopefully the Aussie batsmen can still make it a little bit hard for him."

Murali, 35, and Warne, 38, both started their Test careers in 1992, but the Sri Lankan has only played in 113 matches, compared with the Australian's 145.

In a coup for the Hong Kong Sixes, both the third and fourth all-time Test wicket-takers are also playing in the tournament -- Anil Kumble (566) and Glenn McGrath (563).

Warne declined to respond to rumours he will play in either of the two rival money-spinning Twenty20 leagues being planned in India, but said more Sixes cricket would help promote the sport.

"It would be really good if we had a couple more weeks like this one," he said. "A Sixes event in a place like Dubai would be great to spread the word of cricket."

Chelsea Rout

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Marcus Bent.

An Olivier Kapo penalty and a Liam Ridgewell strike allowed the Blues to equalise twice before Kapo sealed the points nine minutes from the end.

Trinidad and International Kenwyne Jones rescued a point for Sunderland with a goal four minutes from time after Wales midfielder Simon Davies had given Fulham a first-half lead at the Stadium of Light.

Reading continued to defy predictions that they would succumb to 'second season syndrome' as a 2-1 win over Newcastle left Steve Coppel's side well clear of the relegation battle.

Shane Long's 84th minute strike proved decisive after a Michael Duberry own goal had allowed the Magpies to cancel out a first-half opener from Long's Ireland compatriot Dave Kitson.

Portsmouth and West Ham's meeting at Fratton Park ended in a goalless stalemate after the Hammers' Robert Green saved a stoppage time penalty from Zimbabwean forward Benji Mwaruwari.



Citi Cup Golf Tournament 2007

PHOTO: COURTESY

Chief guest Lt. General ATM Zahirul Alam and Mamun Rashid, managing director and country officer of Citibank NA, are seen with the winners of the Citi Cup golf tournament at a prize distribution ceremony on Friday.

Tears over sledging

PTI Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Australia's cricketers rediscovered sportsmanship after a barrage of callers complaining about their behaviour reduced Cricket Australia's receptionist to tears, a new official history says.

Authors Gideon Haigh and David Frith were given complete access to Cricket Australia's archives for the book "Inside Story" and the governing body told them to produce a warts-and-all account of its activities.

"We ask the cricketers who wear the baggy green to play hard but fair and it was only logical to ask our historians to do the same," chairman Creagh O'Connors said.

The book gives insights into events that have shaped the game here since 1905, using both the archives of Cricket Australia -- formerly the Australian Cricket Board -- and interviews with players and officials.

It recounts the controversial "Bodyline" series against England in 1932-33, cricket's move to commercialism in the 1970s and confirms that Shane Warne's off-field behaviour was the reason he never captained the Australian Test team.

The book also details how in 2003 a humble receptionist shamed Australia's all-conquering cricketers into becoming better sports.

Undisputed masters of the cricketing world, the Australian Test team in the early years of the millennium alienated even some of its own fans through a mixture of

excessive sledging and boorish behaviour.

While successful Australian teams of the past had been lauded as the "Invincibles" and "unbeatables," this one was dubbed the "unlovable" because of its snarling attitude and strutting manner.

The 2003 World Cup win was overshadowed by Shane Warne's drug ban, Darren Lehmann was suspended for five games for yelling a racist term after being run out against Sri Lanka and other players were reprimanded for abuse and dissent.

The flashpoint came in the West Indies in May 2003, when paceman Glenn McGrath baited Rammal Sarwan with a lewd taunt.

The batsman had the temerity to respond in kind, at which the Australian paceman exploded with rage, looming over the diminutive Sarwan and threatening to "rip your throat out."

The image was flashed around the world and the sporting reputation of Australia's players sank to a new low, reinforcing the impression that they could dish out abuse but not take it.

Cricket Australia chief executive James Sutherland said he knew the unsporting behaviour was damaging players' reputations, but reinforcing it was posing a problem.

"What became obvious in conversations with the players was that they were in denial, and they were in denial because they were insulated from the consequences of the fall-out from that sort of behaviour," Sutherland told the authors.

Cricket Australia's solution to the dilemma was simple and effective.

ture.

At a function in Sydney, officials took aside senior players including Steve Waugh, Lehmann, McGrath and Matthew Hayden and Ricky Ponting.

They confronted them with footage of recent incidents, along with comments from sponsors saying they were uncomfortable to be seen as supporting such behaviour and read letters and emails from outraged fans.

"Most effectively, they saw an interview with Emma Hopley, the Cricket Australia receptionist for the past year, who told of how she had been reduced to tears by fulminating members of the public," the book says.

It said Waugh was soon drafting a 'Spirit of Cricket' manifesto that set guidelines for the players' on-and-off-field behaviour.

"I wanted us to be remembered for the right reasons," he said.

The Spirit of Cricket programme, extolling the virtues of playing "hard but fair" was launched in October 2003 and the history book says it soon had an impact.

"Instances of truculence and petulance became more noteworthy for being rarer," the authors wrote, with Australia sustaining only one International Cricket Council charge in the next 28 Tests and one in the following 96 one-day internationals.

"During the Ashes series of 2005, Ponting was even criticised for being too friendly and easy going."

"As complaints go, it was an agreeable change."

Dhaka win big

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by 214 runs. Hannan Sarkar continued his bad game when edged an outswinger from Rajshahi's Mohammad Shahjada to skipper Khaled Mashud, with the score on 15. Mashud's counterpart Nafees followed suit, being bowled by seamer Delwar Hossain next over for only 12.

At one point, Barisal slumped to 62-6. But plucky Shaheen Hossain and inform Raisul Islam made sure the match went to the final day, as they added 72 for the seventh wicket. Before being caught and bowled by Suharwardi Shuvo, Raisul scored 52 in more than two hours, hitting five boundaries.

Talha-enders Ali Arman and Talha Jubair added 57 for the ninth wicket of which Talha scored 45 off 43 balls.

For the hosts, Shuvo took three for 66 while Shahjada and Forhad took two each.

Rajshahi, with seven bonus points, are just a wicket away from picking up another victory, following their rout of Sylhet in the opening game.

BRIEF SCORES

KHULNA: First innings 410 all out and second innings 204 all out in 67 overs (Sadat 4, Kayes 7, Bashir 11, Tushar 26, Shakib 50, Sabir 23, Mashrafe 30, Salim 3, Ziaur 23, Murad 9*, Rasel 6, Tariq 4-25, Rubel 1-44, Ashiqur 1-31, Saju 2-52, Ehsanul 2-46).

Bangladesh

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phone to the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF).

With all these excuses, the team will return home on October 30. With no international commitment before next June's SAFF Championship in addition to the poor result in Dushanbe, there is little chance that Nayeemuddin will keep his job.

BFF, which has already indicated it is not interested to keep the 60-year-old Indian, is expected to take a decision on Nayeem by this month.

From the 19 teams that clear the first round, the lowest eight based on ranking move on to the second round and the other 11 to round three. The five top seeds -- Arafat 7, Rajesh 7, Raisul 5, Arif 4, Sajid 10*, Forhad 3-12, Shuvo 3-11, Nayeem 3-7) and second innings 216-9 in 96 overs (Nafees 12, Hannan 3, Bashir 5, Rokibul 24, Iftekhar 7, Raisul 52, Arif 4, Sajid 9*, Shahjada 2-29, Delwar 1-39, Forhad 2-47, Shuvo 3-66, Nayeem 1-25).

RAJSHAHI: First innings 301 all out.

BARISAL: First innings 87 in 51.4 overs (Nafees 19, Hannan 4, Bashir 10, Rokibul 6, Iftekhar 13, Raisul 0, Arif 5, Shaheen 7, Rajon 2, Talha 4, Sajid 10*, Forhad 3-12, Shuvo 3-11, Nayeem 3-7) and second innings 216-9 in 96 overs (Nafees 12, Hannan 3, Bashir 5, Rokibul 24, Iftekhar 7, Raisul 52, Arif 4, Sajid 9*, Shahjada 2-29, Delwar 1-39, Forhad 2-47, Shuvo 3-66, Nayeem 1-25).

DHAKA: First innings 351-9

SYLHET: First innings 96 all out and second innings 221 all out in 72.3 overs (Imtiaz 11, Rahman 24, Rezaul 0, Rajin 32, Kapali 29, Shariful 15, Mushtaq 1, Tapash 0, Nazmul 45*, Enamul 36, Hasibul 6; Mahbubul 1-33, Sharif 1-23, Mosharraf 3-86, Mehrab 5-43).

Result: Dhaka won by an innings and 34 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Mehrab Hossain (Dhaka).

Fun back at the Bridge

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Chelsea, that is good."

Eriksson had enjoyed a serene start to life in English club football but this, as he admitted, was a "wake-up call".

The visitors came into this game flying high in third place but their defending was amateurish and Eriksson could not hide his anguish after suffering the worst defeat of his managerial career.

"I am very disappointed," he said. "I have never lost 6-0 and I'm sure it has never happened to the players either. We have had talk of Manchester City playing talk of Bolton (League) Cup game against Bolton - that is the only good thing from today."

"We are in on Sunday to talk and train and prepare for a very tough Carling (League) Cup game against Bolton - that is the only good thing from today."

Napoli humble

FROM PAGE 20

beaten in the Cagliari goal.

The hosts broke the deadlock on 71 minutes as a deflection left Alessandro Rosina clean through on goal to beat the helpless Fortin.

Cagliari's misery was doubled late on as Motta's header took a wicked deflection off Michele Ferri for a cruel own goal.

"His interest about the support staff and facilities is really encouraging but what impressed me most was his energetic character," he said.

It was a much more demanding issue for the new committee to appoint a national coach and they are all set to fill the four months vacancy.

"But in the end, the national team's performance under him will be counted," added Lipu.

'I am mentally stronger'

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Muttiah Muralidaran's first Test tour with the Sri Lankan team to Australia in 12 years has so far been a tale of police escorts at the airport, security fears, plainclothes people in the crowd... and plenty of

hype.

While it's true Muralidaran had received a hostile reception on previous tours from crowds who continue to chant "no-ball" despite his regular clearances from the ICC, the escorts were there, in fact, to ward off the media, while the plainclothes are part of Cricket Australia's normal plans.

So when Muralidaran stepped up to bowl his first ball of the trip, it was unsurprising that he found rumours of the so-called bear pit ready to bait him in Adelaide had been greatly exaggerated. In their place was a placid Sunday crowd who were quiet as church mice, save for the children playing cricket on the hill. It was hardly fire and brimstone.

Of course, this practice match, against a Chairman's XI, has not attracted the beer-swilling, barracking kind of fans -- the cold and the lack of Australian stars has made it ideal for the quiet enthusiast -- but nevertheless Muralidaran couldn't have had a quieter, easier start to his tour as he adjusted back to playing cricket for the first time Club on Friday.

Commandant, National Defence College, Lt. General ATM Zahirul Alam distributed prizes among the winners as chief guest while Mamun Rashid, managing director and Citi country officer, was also present.

It was a lively Sunday afternoon with a placid Sunday crowd who were quiet as church mice, save for the children playing cricket on the hill. It was hardly fire and brimstone.

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