

'My daughter is better than Buchanan'

PTI, Melbourne

Launching a lampoon at John Buchanan, former captain Ian Chappell has said that his daughter would not have done a bad job as coach of the Australian team.

Defending spin great Shane Warne, who has been criticised for his panning of Buchanan, Chappell said the former coach's contribution in Australia's dream run was nil.

"It's a simple decision. The captain is 95 per cent important; the coach is five per cent important. Guess who I am going to worry about first?" The 'News Limited' quoted Chappell as saying. "Shane Warne would have been a magnificent attacking captain for Australia.

"A lot of people refer to John Buchanan's record as coach. How many wickets and how many catches and how many runs did he make? He didn't make any.

"His contribution to those victories in my opinion is absolutely nil. Is someone going to tell me that if my daughter had coached Australia, would the results have been any different?"

"I am here to tell you the results wouldn't have been any different at all. In fact, they might have been better without him there."

Biman clinch Chess League

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Biman clinched the title of the Dutch-Bangla Bank First Division Chess League when they won the last round game against Mohakhali Prodig Sangha 4-0 at the federation hall-room on Thursday.

The national flag carrier bagged 44.5 points to retain the title and it was their thirteenth league success since they had earned the laurel in 1980.

Leonine Chess Club became runners-up by winning the last round game against Dhaka University Chess Club 3-1 to increase their tally to 43 points while Destiny 2000 Limited finished third with a 3-1 victory over I2soft Solution Ltd.

Chitragong Mohammedan Sporting Club secured 38.5 points after beating Sonali Bank 2.5-1.5 in the last round to secure the fourth spot.

A total of 14 teams took part in the round-robin system league.

Spurs gift

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stoppage time goal gave Reading a 2-1 win at the Madejski Stadium, just as it seemed that Michael Chopra's 82nd-minute penalty would be enough to earn Roy Keane's side a point.

Reading had gone ahead through Icelandic defender Ivar Ingimarsson with just over 20 minutes left.

Managerless Fulham moved out of the bottom three, ahead of Sunderland on goal difference, after a 1-1 draw at home to second-from-bottom Wigan, who took the lead through Marcus Bent but were forced to settle for a point when American winger Clint Dempsey equalised.

Tamim ton

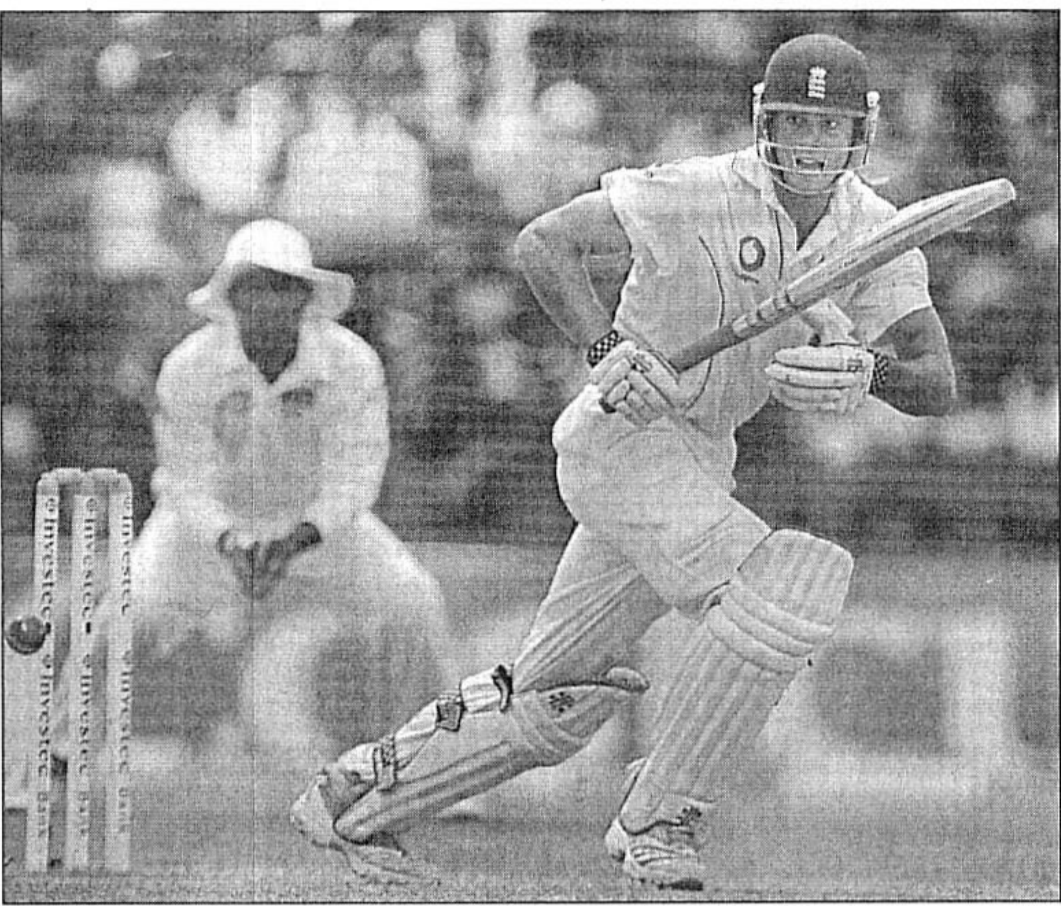
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48.5 overs was at least 30 runs short of an ideal total.

The Tigers needed early wickets and Mashrafe Mortaza and Nazmul Hossain bowled splendidly in the first four over without luck. Having seen off the first few overs the ace openers Hitchenko (35) and Gupitil (59) started playing their strokes. Sajidul Islam, the left-arm paceman who was flown in on Wednesday bowled first change and the batsmen attacked him from the start. Sajidul went for 31 from his first three overs. Only left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak (9-0-29-0) looked threatening as the failure to get breakthroughs cost Bangladesh dearly.

There were a couple of catches that went down with Siddique dropping a sharp one at second slip of Hitchenko from the bowling of Mortaza while Aftab floored an easier one at point. The highlight of the fielding performance was a stunning catch taken by Nazmul who ran a fair distance to his right at long off and held on to the ball with one hand.

"We again gave away the match between the 20th and 40th overs where we lost four wickets. We are doing some of the things right like the top order is playing sensibly and we are not losing wickets in heaps in the first 20 which is a definite improvement. The bowlers tried their best but I think 280 or 290 would have been the right kind of score today and we should have got there. The batsman who gets in most realise that he has to be there till the end," said Ashraful.

"I did not step out too much and played straight. I felt good on the outside also. I left out a lot of balls in the beginning of my innings and that helped in getting my eye in. Unfortunately we still lost but I believe we are getting there and we will do very well if everyone performs like they can," said century-maker Tamim.



England opener Alastair Cook sets off for a quick single on the fifth and final day of the third Test against Sri Lanka at Galle on Saturday.

Rain denies Lanka

Still win series 1-0

Cricket

APP, Galle

Opener Alastair Cook hit a defiant century before rain washed out the last session to help England draw the final cricket Test against Sri Lanka here on Saturday.

Left-handed Cook made 118 as England, needing to bat out the fifth day after following on 418 runs behind, groped to 251-6 in their second innings when a heavy downpour ruined Sri Lanka's hopes of victory.

Rain interrupted play for an hour after lunch but a second wet spell in the post-tea session waterlogged the Galle International Stadium and forced the umpires to abandon the match with 35 overs remaining.

Sri Lanka took the series 1-0, having won the first Test in Kandy by 88 runs, but would have moved to second place behind Australia in the official rankings if they had secured a 2-0 scoreline.

Mutiah Muralidaran finished with three wickets, but the hero of the final day was young Essex opener Cook who stood rock solid at the crease for six hours and 24 minutes to deny Sri Lanka victory.

England captain Michael Vaughan conceded Sri Lanka were the better team and deserved to win the series.

Cook showed why he is rated as one of modern cricket's most promising batsmen by scoring a seventh Test century before his 23rd birthday on Christmas Day.

Sachin Tendulkar of India and Pakistan's Javed Miandad had scored seven tons by their 23rd year, while Australian legend Don Bradman had eight.

Cook scored England's only century during the series, with Vaughan's 87 in the drawn second

Test in Colombo being the next highest score.

Cook was, however, lucky to get that far after he was dropped down the leg-side by wicketkeeper Prasanna Jayawardene off Lasith Malinga in the day's second over when on 54.

England lost three wickets in four balls in the morning session to slip from a comfortable 200-2 to 202-5 by lunch before Matt Prior gave Cook company for two hours to add 50 for the seventh wicket.

Cook departed after tea, caught behind off debutant Chanaka Welegedara, but Prior remained unbeaten on a dour 19 before rain came to England's rescue.

The overnight pair of Cook and Ian Bell put on 61 for the second wicket when Muralidaran bowled Bell for 34 with a ball that kept low on the dual-paced wicket.

Kevin Pietersen (30) helped Cook put on 72 for the third wicket before a dramatic over from Muralidaran 15 minutes before lunch left England in tatters.

Muralidaran dismissed Pietersen and Paul Collingwood in three balls before Ravi Bopara was run out off the last ball of that over to put Sri Lanka on top.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the final day of the third and final Test between England and Sri Lanka at the Galle International Stadium on Saturday:

SRI LANKA: First innings 499-8 declared (M Jayawardene 213 not out, Dilshan 84, Vaas 90; Harmison 3-104)

ENGLAND: First innings 81 (Collingwood 29; Vaas 4-28, Welegedara 2-17)

ENGLAND: Second innings Cook c P Jayawardene b Welegedara 118 Vaughan c M Jayawardene b Welegedara 24 Bell b Muralidaran 34

Pietersen c M Jayawardene b Muralidaran	30
Collingwood st P Jayawardene b Muralidaran	0
Bopara run out	0
Prior not out	19
Sidobhotorn not out	0
Extras: (b-6, lb-5, nb-14, w-1)	26
Total: (For six wickets in 95 overs)	251
Did not bat: Harmison, Hoggard, Panesar.	
Fall of wickets: 1-67, 2-128, 3-200, 4-200, 5-200, 6-250.	
Bowler	O M R W
Muralidaran	38 8 91 3
Vaas	18 7 37 0
Malinga	20 3 42 0
Welegedara	14 1 59 2
Dilshan	3 1 8 0
Silva	2 1 3 0

Result: Match drawn and Sri Lanka clinched three-match series 1-0.

Man-of-the-match and series: Mahela Jayawardene.

Our best

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there and put on a good show."

Tendulkar, who averages 54.16 in 12 Tests in Australia including a memorable unbeaten 241 in the fourth Sydney Test of the 2003-2004 series, said he was feeling fit despite missing the last Test against Pakistan with knee trouble.

Tendulkar, who has amassed 11,289 runs in 142 Tests at 55.07, said he had not contemplated retiring.

"For the past 18 years I have been living my dream and every day is a special one and when we walk out on December 26 (for the start of the first Test against Australia) it will be a terrific occasion," he said.

"I have not (thought about retiring) and I just want to enjoy this tour and if I enjoy it I should do a good job (batting) and that is my focus."

Tendulkar still believes the Australian bowling attack will be formidable even without retired greats Shane Warne and Glenn McGrath.

Tigers revel

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ENGLAND:

Iqbal c Southee b Mason	0
Junaid c Taylor b Southee	4
Aftab run out	20
Ashraf run out	20
Shakib run out	22
Mehrab not out	21
Reza c Hopkins b Styris	31
Rahim not out	1
Extras: (lb-3, w-12)	15
Total: (For 6 wickets in 17 overs)	134
Did not bat: Omar, Sajidul, Shahadat.	
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-19, 3-45, 4-52, 5-86, 6-133.	
Bowler	O M R W
Mason	4 1 21 1
Southee	3 0 31 1
Styris	4 0 28 1
O'Brien	3 0 29 0
Patel	3 0 22 0

Result: Bangladesh won by 4 wickets.

Toss: Bangladesh

Umpires: GA Baxter and AL Hill

Bayern drawn

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It's a very interesting draw with a strong opponent. To go up against the Scots should not be taken for granted, but I will go there with the belief that we will advance to the next stage and then face the winner of the Anderlecht-Bordeaux match, which will be a superior level (than Aberdeen)."

David Moyes's on-form Everton, who finished unbeaten in group A, were drawn against Norwegian side SK Brann.

"It's quite a short trip for us but we are looking forward to it," said Toffees secretary David Harrison.

If Everton were to qualify they would meet either Rosenborg or Fiorentina.

Meanwhile Spurs, who reached the quarterfinals last season but lost to eventual winners Sevilla, drew Czech side Slavia Prague.

Rain ruins India prep

AFP, Melbourne

India were denied another day of valuable match practice ahead of the opening Test against Australia after the final day of their tour match against Victoria was abandoned through rain here Saturday.

Umpires Paul Reiffel and John Ward abandoned the third and final play without a ball being bowled because of a wet field and overnight and morning rain at Junction Oval.

India finished with just 48 overs from the match from which they made 133 for four.

Sourav Ganguly top scored with 59, Rahul Dravid finished 38 not out and Allan Wise took 4-37 for Victoria.

The rain has forced the Indians to rely on indoor practice for the Boxing Day Test although the forecast is for improving weather conditions.

India's players spent much of Friday and Saturday in the indoor nets at the Melbourne Cricket Ground to try to make up for the play they have lost in their only hit-out before the first Test.

Gilly 'sick of criticism'

AFP, Melbourne

Australia's vice-captain Adam Gilchrist on Sunday hit out at continual criticism of the national cricket team from high-profile former players.

He did not refer to specific individuals, but made his comments following a question at a press conference that referred to comments from former teammate Shane Warne.

Warne, who retired from Test cricket last January after taking 708 wickets, and former captain Ian Chappell have recently attacked former national coach John Buchanan.

Last week Warne said Australian cricket was in danger of becoming too arrogant and labelled Buchananas "agosome".

But Gilchrist said Sunday: "There's been a lot said in the paper today, yesterday, this week it seems."

"It (the national team) is an elite club and we've always felt a major characteristic of being in that club is to show respect."

"It just seems that some guys in retirement have lost that respect."

"I'm not sure why people are getting personal about things in the press ... I think we, as a group, are just getting a little bit sick of a lot of the negative comments being afforded towards us or the people involved with the cricket team."

Gilchrist said he also hopes the upcoming four-Test series against India will be played without the on-field verbal clashes that marred Australia's ill-tempered one-day tour of India last October.

Liza finishes ninth

SPORTS REPORTER

Shamima Akhter Liza finished ninth in the Asian girls under-20 chess championship that ended in Mumbai last Saturday.

Liza secured five points from nine games while Indian WIM Mary Ann Gomes became champion with 8.5 points.

A total of 20 players from different countries took part in the competition.

All eyes on big

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(708 wickets) and Glenn McGrath (563 wickets), who retired from Test cricket earlier this year.

It will be up to Brett Lee (247 wickets in 61 Tests) to lead an inexperienced bowling lineup and the challenge of dismissing the powerful Indian batting order, for Australia to claim victory in each Test.

Lee will be backed by a relatively inexperienced support crew -- Shaun Tait (5 wickets in two Tests), Stuart Clark (54 wickets in 11 Tests), Mitchell Johnson (8 wickets in two Tests) and leg-spinner Brad Hogg (9 wickets in four Tests).

Much will depend on pace spearhead Lee, man of the series in last month's 2-0 home Test win over Sri Lanka, to blast out the Indian batting.

But the Indians will be a tough nut to crack with Dravid (9,683 at 55.97), Ganguly (6,346 at 43.17) and Laxman (5,292 at 44.10) backing up Tendulkar on the score of experience and durability.

The Australians will be banking on the runs from their experienced trio, opener Matthew Hayden (7,832 at 52.56), Ponting (9,508 at 59.43) and Adam Gilchrist, the most dangerous No.7 in Test cricket, with 5,420 runs at 49.27.

Mike Hussey, Andrew Symonds, Michael Clarke and the emerging opener Phil Jaques give Australia's top-order a solid look.

It should be a high-scoring four-Test match series with the Melbourne Test followed by Sydney (January 2-6), Perth (Jan 16-20) and Adelaide (Jan 24-28).

Ponting gets his revenge

Australia win Chappell-Hadlee Trophy 2-0

Cricket

AFP, Hobart

Skipper Ricky Ponting and his bowlers tormented New Zealand on Thursday as Australia reclaimed the Chappell Hadlee Trophy one-day series at Bellerive Oval in emphatic fashion.

The juggernaut Australians clobbered the Black Caps for 282 for six off their 50 overs and then reduced them to 168 all out off just 34 overs to seal a 114-run victory and a 2-0 series victory.

Ponting's men lost the last series 3-0 in New Zealand last February, just months before they went through the World Cup unconquered in the Caribbean.

It was Australia's 17th victory in their last completed 19 one-day internationals, emphasising the gulf with the rest of the cricket world.

Ponting's unbeaten 134 off 133 balls, following his 107 off 108 balls in Australia's opening series win in Adelaide last week, justifiably made him man of the series.

It was Ponting's sixth one-day century against New Zealand and the 25th in the limited-over form of the game.

"Whenever you spend time out

in the middle like that you can feel confident about yourself next time you go out to the crease," he said.

"For me now I'm not someone who needs to train a lot and hit a lot of balls. I know my own game, my own preparation pretty well now."

"Today I struggled a little bit early on, New Zealand bowled really well early on and had us under some pressure."

"It was up to me at that stage to really dig in and try to bat through the innings -- luckily I was good enough today to do that."

Once Ponting powered Australia to their 282 total, the pressure was on the Kiwis to keep in the contest after New Zealand won the toss and sent them into bat.

After speedster Brett Lee removed both openers, Brendon McCullum (6) and Jamie How (2), inside the first five overs, the Black Caps were always up against it and they slumped to 88 for seven before some late luster hitting by Scott Styris delayed the inevitable.

Styris crashed two sixes and nine fours in his belligerent 75 off 79 balls, including three consecutive boundaries off Lee before the pace spearhead rattled his middle-stump with a yorker.

Lee claimed 3-47 off nine overs and leg-spinner Brad Hogg 3-49 from six overs.

Once again, Ponting was in imperious form, clubbing 10 boundaries and two sixes to guide the Australians to their testing total.

Kiwi skipper Daniel Vettori praised his counterpart, saying Ponting was already known as one of cricket's all-time greats.

"I don't think there's too many people in both forms of the game that can match him," Vettori said.

"Even with the stats now he's going to be remembered as one of the greats, but I think they're going to get even better and better."

Andrew Symonds smashed 52 off 63 balls with four fours and opener Matthew Hayden contributed 29 off 32 balls.

The Kiwi bowlers were hard-pressed to contain the Australian batsmen with all-rounder Jacob Oram having the best return with 2-34 off 10 overs.

The Australians lost Brad Haddin (26 off 25 balls) and James Hopes (20 from 17 balls) to run-outs.

Wicketkeeping understudy Haddin got his opportunity to play when Adam Gilchrist was rested, allowing Michael Clarke (7) to open the Australian innings with Hayden.

The second match of the series was washed out after just six overs in Sydney last Sunday.

Eid in foreign land

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After the spontaneous Eid embraces and greetings it was time to head for the Melville Intermediate School where the Bangladeshi community members had arranged a grand breakfast for the team. The Bangladeshi population in Hamilton has temporarily crossed the 100 mark with the Tigers coming here but with all assembling in the schools cooking lab the atmosphere grew festive. Ladies of every Bangladeshi household in Hamilton were assigned to bring in a special dish of their choice and in the end the menu list had no less than 20 items including sweet delicacies.

"For most of us this is the first Eid we are celebrating away from Bangladesh but you have really made us feel at home," said Bangladesh team manager Ahmed Sajjadul Alam while thanking the local Bangladeshis.

On behalf of the community one gentleman asked Mohammad Ashraf, the Tigers captain how the team was feeling in New Zealand.

"We have played two practice matches and the wickets look very good. The conditions are also nothing to be concerned about and this team is more experienced at this level than the one that last toured here in 2001-02. So you can look forward to a good showing from us," said Ashraf.

Back on the team bus Mashrafe Bin Mortaza had grabbed hold of a mike and had started anchoring his own version of an Eid special. His 'victims' included Syed Rassel, Tushar Imran and Abdur Razaq and all were forced to sing to the audience. Then came the slapsticks designed for Aftab Ahmed who then took over and interviewed fellow Chittagonian Tamim Iqbal before giving way to Tushar. One by one all had to reply to specially designed questions that had the others bursting into laughter.

It was business as usual in the afternoon with the team practising in two groups at Seddon Park. Sajidul Islam, the left-arm pace bowler who has flown in as Syed

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Rasel's replacement trained with the Tigers for the first time.

With Tushar recovering from a sore shoulder, the team management had requested an additional batsman and the selectors have chosen Rafin Saleh who will arrive in New Zealand on Tuesday.

Tomorrow the squad will leave for Auckland early in the morning to play their third warm-up match. The opponents will be the Auckland Aces who are leading the first class table here. Both sides will be allowed to field 12 players.

Carlos backs

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"There will be no spectacle, it will be 1-0, 1-0, 1-0."

"But the team will be there, correctly set up and balanced on the pitch. And always winning."

Carlos added: "I don't know if England will win the World Cup in 2010, but they can make it to the finals. No doubt about that."

Arsenal test

FROM PAGE 20

Spanish giants and nine-time former champions Real Madrid in what promises to be another humdinger of a match-up.

Roma coach Luciano Spalletti remained upbeat, after admitting however he would have preferred another team.

Real's sporting director Pedja Mijatovic admitted it was not the easiest of ties.

Chelsea play Greek underdogs Olympiacos, while German club Schalke 04 will no doubt be happy after being drawn against Porto, winners of the Champions League in 2004.

Completing the draw was the tie between Turkish champions Fenerbahce and Sevilla, who trumped Arsenal to top their group and land themselves a tie they will be confident of winning.

Kumble banks

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have a good look at the fast bowlers. I have not seen Pankaj Singh in the middle before and also wanted to have a look at the young Ishant [Sharma], RP Singh, who is returning from an injury, and Irfan Pathan, who is making a comeback. Now I can't do that."

However, Kumble said the team was not unduly bothered and they were looking at "maximising what's available". The first Test starts from December 26 in Melbourne.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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