

Warne given mentor role

AFP, Melbourne

Champion cricketer Shane Warne will coach and develop young spin bowlers in a new initiative announced Wednesday by Cricket Australia.

Warne, who revolutionised leg-spin bowling during his 15-year playing career, will work for Cricket Australia (CA) encouraging young aspiring spin bowlers, the sport's governing body here said.

Warne, who captured a then world record 708 wickets in 145 Tests before his retirement after last January's home Ashes series against England, will pass on his skills and knowledge to a new generation of Australian spinners.

CA said Warne, 38, will also spend time at the CA Centre of Excellence and work with the Australian women's and men's squads.

He will be part of preparations for the Australian Under-19 team before they head to the ICC World Cup in 2008, the organisation said.

Warne said he was looking forward to giving something back to cricket.

"The work I'm going to be doing with young spinners and their state captains is a really important role and I believe I've got a lot to offer," Warne said in a CA statement.

Sourav

FROM PAGE 17
paperboard replica of a stadium, adorning it with 100 balloons and the same number of cricket balls.

Another 100 flowers were used to write 'Sourav', as the tri-colour and the Australian national flag fluttered, while a makeshift scoreboard showed Ganguly and Laxman as the batsmen in the middle.

Homemade pancakes were distributed among the people, with youths constantly raising slogans eulogising the talismanic player who made a stellar comeback scoring more than 1,000 Test runs this year.

Rajshahi-Khulna

FROM PAGE 17
Stadium in Chittagong, the hosts take on Dhaka while basement side Sylhet are up against Barisal at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in the other matches of this round after a gap of nine days due to the Eid-ul-Azha holidays.

Third-placed Chittagong (77) are just a point above Dhaka while Barisal are in fifth place with 59 points. They are also struck by departures to New Zealand as captain Shahriar Nafees is also missing from their team.

FIFA warns BFF

FROM PAGE 17
which expired on April last year, has been given the responsibility of forming divisional and district football associations without involvement of any government officials.

However, the EC's tendency to go alone by avoiding popular demands as well as the BFF councillors, who have not endorsed the new statutes, have raised eyebrows.

Many have stated Sultan's resignation to the FIFA president instead of tendering it to the executive committee of BFF as simply an eyewitness to avoid clash with the Caretaker Government. It is speculated that the EC is trying to stay in power for another term showing the immunity given by FIFA.

Fatah also informed that Sultan, who recently engaged himself in altercations with sports adviser Tapan Chowdhury and the media, sent a letter to the sports adviser on December 18 regretting his behaviour with the country's sports boss. The BFF chief, however, has yet to apologise to the media for his baseless and accusing remarks.

'My best spell'

FROM PAGE 17
spins it more than me. It was a bit soft so I tried him early. He bowled well, kept things tight. He bowled well together. He kept it tight at one end. He was a bit unlucky. But I'm sure he'll be really effective in the second innings."

It's been thirty years since India have visited Australia with a bowler leading the side. Kumble, though, didn't think he was under any additional pressure with the ball in hand. "I was happy the way it went. I had this problem in India when I played as a captain. When I held back and was not bowling, the rest of the players kept saying, 'Why have you stopped, keep bowling.' Today I had to do that. It's important that I ensure I bowl the number of overs I do as a bowler. Today they kept encouraging me to bowl every time."

Kumble has gone through a career with question marks over his effectiveness abroad. His previous tour to Australia dispelled a few of them but recent efforts in Cape Town and The Oval prompted a few to raise their eyebrows. This time he's here as a captain and responsibility seems to have spurred him on. Four years ago it was another captain, Sourav Ganguly, who made the early dent on the series. Kumble matched that without breaking much sweat.



Monwar Anis Khan, chairperson of the Women's Wing Committee of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), speaks at a press conference ahead of the inaugural Women's Divisional Cricket League at the board's management office in Gulshan yesterday.

A timely revival

CRICINFO, undated

So jet-lagged were a few Indian players on arrival that some spent the first few days in Melbourne sleeping. It helped that the warm-up match against Victoria was rained off, allowing them a longer rest. And if they were still struggling, there was always Boxing Day, a bank holiday. India normally spend the first day of an away series sleeping and by lunch Wednesday they were sleepwalking. What followed was pleasantly shocking and not Indian cricket as we've come to know it.

Nobody should have been surprised at the opening. Once the toss and national anthems were done, the scorers might as well have given Australia a head-start before the first ball. There was a buzz around the ground but India were taking their time. In the tenth over of the day, RP Singh, just crunched past point for four, was asking for another slip. But he seemed the only one awake at the time; Phil Jaques promptly edged the next one through the vacant fourth-slip region.

India seem to have replaced their poor travelers tag with one of poor starters. Series-opening days for India on tour are full of butterflies. Take out Virender Sehwag's

mayhem in Multan and you have a forgettable record for the Indian team. West Indies began the 2002 series with 270 for 4 on the first day in Georgetown, England managed 257 for 4 at Lord's, Australia smacked 262 for 2 in Brisbane four years ago, Pakistan piled up 326 for 2 in Lahore and England settled into 268 for 4 at Lord's earlier this year. Things aren't that different when India bat first: 187 all out in Galle, 161 in Wellington, 241 in St John's, and 156 for 5 in Johannesburg.

At lunch Wednesday, Anil Kumble might have been wishing he'd won the toss but there was some comfort in the logic that it's better to slip up on the field rather than collapse with the bat. Also, he could always bring himself on, peg away and irritate. He had his googlies, toppers, and legbreaks to bank on. More importantly, he had been in this position all his life.

India returned from lunch revived - fittingly, given that their countrymen were waking up back home. Kumble set the alarm bells ringing with a fizzing googly past Jaques before Zaheer Khan, slicing through Ricky Ponting's defences, showed he was wide awake as well. Kumble then accounted for Mike Hussey with another googly, probably his best ball of the day. The ground was buzzing. Yuvraj Singh was bouncing up and down at point. India had finally arrived, not

only in body but also in mind. Australia had dealt the early blow. India were unleashing a counter-punch.

RP Singh wasn't to be left behind. He had missed the previous series against Pakistan and started shakily here but he cranked it up a notch. "Drink, drive, bloody idiot," said a hoarding on the boundary. Michael Clarke couldn't be accused on the first count but he tried to drive a wide one at a wrong time and edged to slip. VVS Laxman's eyes lit up and, crouching low, he snapped up a beauty. This was the sort of cricket India usually play on the second day of the series, fighting back gallantly after being down. Instead they had turned their body clocks a good day ahead. What a difference five-and-a-half hours makes.

It wasn't naked aggression that won India the day (that was left to the two streakers who interrupted the show towards the end) but a controlled, planned, thought-filled approach. Put a short midwicket in for Andrew Symonds, who was swishing wildly, and you had a wicket. Slip in a googly to Adam Gilchrist and you had a wild hoick - a shot that was as ugly as the word itself. India will be thrilled that they've got rid of the first-day blues. There's little more they could have done to earn a wonderful night's sleep.

Kumble stifles Aussies

FROM PAGE 17
events that I really enjoy," Hayden said.

"I really enjoy playing spin bowling, and the majority of overs today (Wednesday) were spin on a first-day wicket as well."

Hayden was finally out when he miscued to Rahul Dravid at mid-on off Zaheer Khan, a half hour after tea.

Hayden shared in a century opening partnership with Jaques and departed at the fifth wicket down to massive acclaim from the 68,465 Boxing Day crowd.

He struggled early in the morning but was in imperious form in the afternoon, and batted for 268 minutes and struck nine fours off 183 balls.

Jaques was deceived by a Kumble delivery and was smartly stumped by Mahendra Singh Dhoni. He put on 135 for the first wicket with Hayden in 142 minutes.

Jaques, who has replaced retired opener Justin Langer, continued his impressive summer, following up his scores of 100, 150 and 68 in last month's two Tests against Sri Lanka and bringing up his first century opening stand with

Hayden. Zaheer claimed Ricky Ponting's significant wicket, bowling the Australian skipper for four with a delivery that straightened off the pitch.

Kumble snared another coveted wicket, trapping Hussey leg before wicket with a googly that struck his back leg as he played forward to the wrist-spinner.

Hussey went to the crease averaging 86.18 in each innings and the Indian fieldsmen rejoiced his cheap dismissal.

Fielding substitute Dinesh Karthik latched onto a sharp catch at mid-wicket to dismiss Symonds for 35 and Gilchrist gave his wicket away lashing out to Sachin Tendulkar at backward point.

Kumble completed his 35th five-wicket haul in Tests when Lee was lbw to a quicker ball.

India are chasing their first series win in Australia after winning just four Tests in eight previous Australian tours.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard on the first day of the first Test between Australia and India at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Wednesday:

AUSTRALIA: First innings				
Jaques st Dhoni b Kumble	66			
Hayden c Dravid b Zaheer	124			
Ponting b Zaheer	4			
Hussey lbw b Kumble	2			
Clarke c Laxman b RP Singh	20			
Symonds c Karthik (sub) b Kumble	35			
Gilchrist c Tendulkar b Kumble	23			
Hogg c Dravid b Zaheer	17			
Lee lbw b Kumble	0			
Johnson not out	10			
Clark not out	21			
Extras: (lb-5, w-1, nb-9)	15			
Total: (For 9 wickets in 90 overs)	337			
Fall of wickets: 1-135, 2-162, 3-165, 4-225, 5-241, 6-281, 7-288, 8-294, 9-312.				
Bowler				
Zaheer	22	1	93	3
RP Singh	19	3	77	1
Harbhajan	20	3	61	0
Ganguly	3	1	15	0
Kumble	25	4	84	5
Tendulkar	1	0	2	0
INDIA: Jaffer, Dravid, Laxman, Tendulkar, Ganguly, Yuvraj, Dhoni, Kumble, Harbhajan, Zaheer, RP Singh.				
Toss: Australia				
Umpires: Mark Benson (ENG), Billy Bowden (NZL)				
Third umpire: Steve Davis (AUS)				
Match referee: Mike Procter (RSA)				

Blazing Ash takes blame

FROM PAGE 17
when they fled the ball.

"I don't want to blame the middle-order batsmen. They are the best we have and given time they will become very good players. I think it was Tanim and Ashraf who should take the blame because they gave it away after getting in and I believe they'll feel the same way," said coach Jimmy Siddons.

"The batters forgot some team rules out there. The bowlers bowled as well as they could but New Zealand had good batsmen and there was never enough runs to put pressure on them."

"I think this was a 260-plus wicket and even if we could have got to 230-240 then the match might have been interesting because traditionally this is not a very high-scoring venue. So I must take responsibility for the batting debacle after 25 overs. We will learn from this and hopefully make fewer mistakes in the next match in Napier because in every game we have shown improvement on this tour. In the past we used to lose too many early wickets but now the top

order is giving us fine starts. We just need our middle-order to fire," said Ashraf.

The tourists travel to Napier Thursday for the second ODI on December 28.

SCOREBOARD				
Scoreboard of the first one-day international between New Zealand and Bangladesh at Eden Park in Auckland on Wednesday:				
BANGLADESH				
Iqbal c Gillespie b Oram	50			
Zunaed c Gillespie b Mills	13			
Aftab c Fulton b Gillespie	8			
Ashraf c Fulton b Oram	70			
Shakib b Gillespie	6			
Mehrab c How b Oram	3			
Rahim c McCullum b Gillespie	0			
Reza c Styris b Mills	4			
Mortaza c Oram b Mills	17			
Razzak not out	22			
Shahadat not out (How)	3			
Extras: (w-4, nb-1)	5			
Total: (All out in 46.3 overs)	201			
Fall of wickets: 1-27, 2-39, 3-136, 4-150, 5-151, 6-151, 7-154, 8-170, 9-177, 10-201.				
Bowler				
Mills	10	2	46	3

Martin	10	1	35	0
Gillespie	8	0	27	3
Vettori	9	0	48	0
Oram	8.3	1	36	3
Styris	1	0	9	0
NEW ZEALAND				
How c Aftab b Shakib	88			
McCullum c b Reza	40			
Fulton c Mehra b Shakib	35			
Styris not out	25			
Taylor lbw b Shakib	1			
Sinclair not out	8			
Extras: (lb-4, w-2)	20			
Total: (For 4 wickets in 42.4 overs)	203			
Fall of wickets: 1-90, 2-157, 3-173, 4-194.				
Did not bat: Oram, Mills, Vettori, Gillespie, Martin.				
Bowler				
Mortaza	8	0	37	0
Shahadat	8	0	29	0
Razzak	10	0	44	0
Reza	5	0	21	1
Shakib	9.4	0	57	3
Ashraf	2	0	12	0
Result: New Zealand won by 6 wickets.				
Man-of-the-match: Jamie How.				
Toss: New Zealand				
Umpires: Gary Baxter (NZL) and Peter Parker (AUS)				

Women's Div Cricket from today

SPORTS REPORTER

The first-ever Women's Divisional Cricket League gets underway today with Rajshahi taking on Khulna at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Maj Gen Sina Ibn Jamali will inaugurate the meet where Dhaka and Chittagong are the other teams to take part in the 35-over-a-side league.

Monwar Anis Khan, chairperson of BCB's Women's Wing Committee, gave the details of the league at a press conference yesterday at the BCB's management office in Gulshan.

Square Toiletries Ltd is sponsoring the league by providing Tk 4 lakhs out of total budget of Tk 23 lakh.

The champions will receive Tk 15,000 while the runners-up Tk 10,000 as prize money in addition to trophies.

All the participating players will get Tk 1000 each while the highest scorer, wicket taker and best wicket keeper will get Tk 2000 each.

The most disciplined team will get a fair play trophy and prize of Tk 5000.

The best player of the league will be awarded Tk 5000 while player of the match Tk 1000.

England

FROM PAGE 20

students. "They have made significant improvements. I believe that they will be competitive enough to win places in our age-group teams," said Tipu who feels the need of an academy for training purpose as all residential camps depend on the availability of space at the BKSPP, country's lone sports institute at Savar.

Local coordinator Fazlur Rahman Babul, Bangladesh Football Federation vice-president Monir Ahmed were present in the daylong trip to Savar among others.

Senior Division

FROM PAGE 17
Arambhing are the only B. League club playing in the competition.

The teams: Arambhing, Badda Jagarani, Victoria, Wanderers, Youngmen's, Dipali, Mohakkhali, Wari, Agrani Bank, Purbachal, City Club, Jatrabari and Sunrise.

Mashud, Rafique

FROM PAGE 17
to the condition and his last Test performance in Sri Lanka was also not bad. That's why we didn't find any reason to send Mashud despite his good form in the national league and in addition we have yet to get a full fitness report on him," he explained of Mashud's omission.

In Rafique's case what we felt was that a spinner like Enamul who can bowl a little slower would be more effective than him. Enamul has already proved his worth as a longer-version bowler and his performance in the national league was also noteworthy. "On the other hand we still believe that Rafique has been completely out of sorts since the last home series against India and his performance in the domestic competition and attitude towards the competition also forced us to take the decision," he added.

The former national player also explained the reason behind the selection of Bashir and Nafees, who got the nod because of his late comeback in the national cricket league. "The time has yet to come to think about the Test fate of Bashir because we don't want to forget his contribution as a Test batsman. On the other hand we always believe that Nafees is a very important player for us. We dropped Nafees from the one-day squad because of his woeful performances but he has returned among runs lately to get back his place," said Rafique.

WI ride
FROM PAGE 20
SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard at tea on the first day of the first Test between South Africa and the West Indies at St George's Park on Wednesday:

WEST INDIES: First innings				
Gayle c Kallis b Harris	66			
Ganga c Boucher b Nel	33			
Morton c Prince b Ntini	33			
Samuels not out	4			
Chanderpaul not out	44			
Extras: (lb-5, nb-3, w-1)	9			
Total: (For 3 wickets in 55 overs)	190			
To bat: Bravo, Ramdin, Sammy, Edwards, Taylor, Powell.				
Fall of wickets: 1-98, 2-102, 3-116.				
Bowler				
Steyn	16	0	71	0
Ntini	13	1	57	1
Nel	13	4	36	1
Harris	7	3	15	1
Kallis	6	3	6	0
SOUTH AFRICA: Smith, Gibbs, Amla, Kallis, Prince, De Villiers, Boucher, Nel, Harris, Steyn, Ntini.				
Umpires: Aleem Dar (PAK), R Tiffin (ZIM).				

Hayden warns India

Cricket

AFP, Melbourne

First innings centurion Matthew Hayden has warned India to expect batting on a deteriorating MCG wicket in a Boxing Day Test where scoring will be hard to achieve.

The veteran Australian opener stood out with an authoritative 124 -- his sixth hundred in nine Tests at the Melbourne Cricket Ground and his 28th Test century -- as the Australians struggled to 337 for nine at stumps on the opening day.

Openers Hayden and Phil Jaques propelled Australia to a 135-run opening stand, but scoring became progressively harder over the final two sessions.

Hayden believes India will have the worst of the batting conditions over the remaining days of the

Melbourne Test.

"I think we've lost a few too many wickets, there's no doubt about that, but in my mind it was a difficult enough wicket and those conditions will be revealed over the next four days," Hayden said.

"The fact is we are facing quite a difficult wicket. It's definitely a par effort (Australia's score), but maybe one or two more wickets down."

"I think it is going to be a wicket that will be definitely hard to score on over the next few days."

"They are going to be slow conditions, they are going to be challenging for run-scoring and I think you will see Australia putting the pressure with good in-out fields and really try to constrict India."

"I definitely think the pitch is going to deteriorate, just looking at it, and it is definitely going to be difficult to bat on over the last day."

The 36-year-old opening bats-

man moved past former national captain Allan Border to become the eighth all-time player with the most Test centuries.

The powerful left-hander continued his liking for India's bowlers, bringing up his fourth century against them to average 65.14 compared to his career average of 53.04.

"I've built this particular match up in my mind more than any other, it announces the summer, it's the vibe of the ground, the spirit of Christmas, having your families around, I just think it's one of those events that I really enjoy," Haydensaid.

"I really enjoy playing spin bowling, and the majority of overs today (Wednesday) were spin on a first-day wicket as well."

Hayden was finally out when he miscued to Rahul Dravid at mid-on off Zaheer Khan, a half hour after tea.

Pleasing all at once

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Groups of Australians spent the afternoon wondering whether they were being unpatriotic for smiling when India started running through the home team. For the first session those local supporters who demand nothing but dominance by Ricky Ponting's men were satisfied with the direction of the game. Their disgruntlement when it changed in the second session was offset by the joy felt -- and heard -- at the ground by cricket supporters who are desperate to see Australia challenged. After the first day there is hope this series might be the fair fight fans have been craving since the 2005 Ashes.

Australia's Test pattern seemed to be continuing when Matthew Hayden and Phil Jaques reached 135 in front of the ecstatic sardines in Bay 13. Was it too early to call the series? Sri Lanka were suffocated after giving up gigantic first-innings totals in November and India looked set to suffer the same problem.

Fortunately Anil Kumble arrived after lunch with a couple of precise wrong'un and Australia quickly lost 3 for 30. For any other team it would not qualify as a collapse, but it does for a side that has such a celebrated order. A stadium that was two-thirds full was quickly taking extra notice. Australia, who have been so dominant in their 14-match winning streak, were experiencing a slice of pressure on a tricky surface and optimistic locals started smirking behind their hands.

The players talk about their love

of being tested and competing under the toughest conditions. Since England arrived in 2006 the scenario has occurred infrequently and usually only in one-day internationals. Nothing is better than watching high-quality players when they are being eyeballed.

Having lost three top-order wickets in a session, Australia's batsmen started to behave differently. Michael Clarke, who left slashing at a wide delivery, was particularly nervy when he arrived in the unusual situation, looking for a single that wasn't there and being sent back by Hayden, who was immune from the problems while producing a steady 124. Hayden would later speak in depth about the difficulty of the pitch, but external stresses also contributed to his teammates' discomfort.

Andrew Symonds stepped out, started flaying from the first ball, which he pulled into his foot, and never gained composure. His game is built on aggression, but tension had spread through the order and he was trying unsuccessfully to shake it off. The policy also didn't work for Adam Gilchrist, who batted on the opening day of a Test for the first time in more than a year.

Indians in the stands danced again after Sachin Tendulkar caught Gilchrist, who tried to thrash a Kumble offering that was too far outside off stump for the shot. Gilchrist's method is similar to Symonds' and no punishment will be invoked, but the dismissal added to a strangely casual performance from players who have grown used to pummeling.

Thousands at the MCG are supporting the visitors, but the noise made during the dismissals

