

WI under-19s arrive today

SPORTS REPORTER

The West Indies under-19 cricket team have landed in Dhaka yesterday to play four one-day matches against their Bangladesh counterparts as part of their preparations for the ICC under-19 World Cup to be held in Malaysia next month.

The 18-member squad comprises 15 players and three officials. Sharmarh Brooks, a right-handed batsman, is the captain, accompanied by 54-year old former West Indies international Larry Gomes as coach.

The first two matches of the series will be held at the BKSP on January 31 and February 2.

The third and fourth matches will be held at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium on February 4 and 6.

Meanwhile, the Nepal U-19 team leave today after losing the three-match one-day series 2-0.

TEAM

Sharmarh Brooks (captain), Steven Jacobs (vice-captain), Adrian Barath, Nkruma Bonner, Darren Bravo, Kyle Corbin, Andre Creary, Jason Dawes, Dawney Grant, Delorn Johnson, Horace Miller, Veerasammy Permaul, Kieren Powell, Devon Thomas (wicketkeeper), Shacaya Thomas.

First win for Purbachal

SPORTS REPORTER

Purbachal Paradis recorded their first win in the Senior Division Football League when they beat bottom-table City Club 1-0 in yesterday's match at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium Kamalapur.

Shahadat Hossain Babu scored a sublime goal with a sidevolley outside from the penalty area to separate the two sides on the half hour.

Purbachal raised their collection to five points after six rounds while City stuck to one point after four defeats in five outings.

Jatrabari KC will look forward to regain pole position from Victoria when they take on Agrami Bank in today's second match after the battle between Wanderers and Youngmen's Club Fakirpool, who attempt to reach one point within the leaders.

Tired Tait leaves

FROM PAGE 17 going forward to ensure that whatever assistance he requires is provided to him. Shaun's personal welfare is our primary concern as well as his return to cricket at an appropriate point.

The South Australian Cricket Association's medical officer, Terry Farquharson, said Tait felt he needed to get away from the game. "Shaun has experienced recurrent injuries dating back to 2005 with a shoulder injury requiring surgery, an elbow injury in 2007 also requiring surgery, which has caused him ongoing pain as well as suffering intermittent low back and hamstring injuries," Farquharson said.

"The combination of his injury history and the demands of being an elite professional cricketer has affected his physical, and significantly, his emotional well-being. Shaun feels he needs a rest from cricket, and I support this, which will allow him to recover both physically and emotionally."

Tait was expected to be a key part of Australia's CB Series squad after his World Cup success. However, his absence will leave Australia with an even more inexperienced attack, with Glenn McGrath already missing from the side that triumphed in the Caribbean.

Maradona visits

FROM PAGE 20 Besides Czech midfielder Marek Matejovsky, also acquired for an undisclosed fee, Kebe is the only January transfer window arrival at the Madejski Stadium as they battle against the drop.

At the other end of the table, Nicolas Anelka, Chelsea's big January signing, is targeting a clean sweep of Champions League, Premier League, FA Cup and League Cup silverware.

"I hope this season that my wait will come to an end and I will have more trophies," said the France striker, signed from Bolton for 15 million pounds (30 million dollars).

"It's a strange feeling for me because it's like another world at Chelsea to where I was. I was fighting against relegation and now I am fighting to win things."

"It will be very difficult for us to win everything, but that is our aim."

Chelsea, already through to this season's League Cup final, have won their last eight matches, a 2-1 victory at Wigan on Saturday sending them through to the FA Cup fifth round.

Reading, by contrast, have gone seven games without victory, winning just two of their last 14 games and were beaten 2-0 at home by Manchester United in their last game, on January 19.

The Royals, who have never won at Stamford Bridge, have to look back to a second-tier 3-1 win in 1930 for their last league victory over Chelsea.



NOVELTY WEARING OFF: Prolific batsman Mohammad Yousuf (L) watches as his Pakistan teammate Sohail Tanvir rolls out a delivery through his peculiar wrong-footed action during net practice at the Faisalabad Cricket Stadium on Tuesday.

Sree stands out among Indians

Cricket

PTI, Mumbai

Indian cricketers, by and large, have behaved well on the field of play in the last two calendar years and Harbhajan Singh's offence committed in the January 2-6 Sydney Test against Australia is only the sixth instance of a player from the country being booked under the ICC's Code of Conduct in 20 months.

Harbhajan Singh, who got great support from the Cricket Board, which appointed VR Manohar as the players' Counsel to argue his case from Mumbai via a teleconference when his appeal was heard by New Zealand's Appeals Commissioner John Hansen in Adelaide, is the first this year to get a punishment for breach of the ICC's CoC.

He was on Tuesday fined 50 per cent of his match fees after being found guilty of breaching Code 2.8 (for using abusive language against Australian all-rounder Andrew Symonds) after being absolved of uttering racist remarks at his opponent, for

Harbhajan off

FROM PAGE 17 "The one-day series will go on as scheduled," BCCI secretary Niranjan Shah told AFP after the appeal decision was announced.

"Harbhajan has now only been punished for using obscene language and will be fined 50 per cent of his match fees," he said. Indian media reports suggested the BCCI and Cricket Australia had worked out a compromise to drop the charges against Harbhajan and salvage the one-day series.

Australian captain Ricky Ponting and senior Indian player Sachin Tendulkar reportedly wrote letters to Hansen asking him to downgrade the charges.

Australia's national AAP news agency said a shared version of events, signed by all players involved on both sides, was presented to Hansen.

Harbhajan, Tendulkar, Ponting, Symonds, Michael Clarke and Matthew Hayden all attended the hearing at the Federal Court in Adelaide.

India had initially threatened to pull out of the tour after Harbhajan was banned, but relented when the ICC withdrew controversial umpire Steve Bucknor from the Test series and agreed to hear the bowler's appeal.

Harbhajan played the final Test pending a decision on his appeal. World champions Australia won the series 2-1.

Following the verdict, Indian

which he had been banned for three Tests earlier by ICC match referee Mike Procter, and against which he had gone in appeal.

Barring a lone infringement by Virender Sehwag of Code 1.5 for excessive appealing, it had been another temperamental Indian player, S Sreesanth, who alone had been found guilty of breaching the CoC before Harbhajan in the last two years.

Sehwag was found guilty for appealing excessively during the June 2-5, 2006, first Test against the West Indies at St. Johns, Antigua and was fined 20 per cent of his match fees by ICC match referee Jeff Crowe.

BCB wants

FROM PAGE 17 described in the event of a no show. "Some legal issues were also not cleared which we discussed during the meeting. They have also brought the legal arbitration issue and said that they are ready to go anywhere in the world except Bangladesh. And I think a logical approach from both sides is needed for a peaceful solution," Momen said.

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Two more rookies to get game

REUTERS, Lahore

Pakistan will rest Kamran Akmal, Salman Butt and Yasir Arafat for the fourth one-day international against Zimbabwe on Wednesday.

Uncapped Khuram Manzoor and Wahab Riaz, along with wicketkeeper Saifraz Ahmed have been called up.

"The idea is to rest the seniors with the series won and give maximum number of chances to the new players to test them out at the international level," chief selector Salahuddin Ahmed told Reuters.

Pakistan hold a 3-0 lead in the five-match series.

SQUAD Shoaib Malik (captain), Nasir Jamshed, Khalid Latif, Khuram Manzoor, Mohammad Yousuf, Younis Khan, Misbahul Haq, Shahid Afridi, Fawad Alam, Sarfraz Ahmed, Sohail Tanvir, Kamran Hussain, Sohail Khan, Wahab Riaz.

Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall sports

SPORTS REPORTER

Marzan Binte Azad, a student of Peace and Conflict Studies department, was crowned champion while Social Welfare student Selina Begum became runner-up yesterday in the annual sports competition of Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib hall of Dhaka University.

In a total of fifteen events, more than a hundred students participated.

Dhaka University treasurer Professor Syed Abul Kalam Azad was present during the prize-giving ceremony as chief guest. The hall's provost Professor Dr Dil Roushan Jinnat Ara Nazreen chaired the presentation.

Prime Bank

FROM PAGE 17 decent start," said Monir last evening.

The acting BFF chief added that they would get half the amount first to help the participating clubs prepare for the top competition.

"We don't know how much they are giving us but it would be a substantial amount," Monir added.

The BFF had wanted Tk one crore each for the B. League and the NFL.

Meanwhile, the professional league clubs have rejected BFF's wishes to hold the footballers' transfers by February.

The B. League committee, after last night's meeting with the club representatives, has set a proposed transfer date from March 15 to April 14. The clubs will return with their decision within a week.

The clubs demanded the delay because they want to recruit players from the ongoing Senior Division League, which actually is last year's competition. Also, many clubs including Muktiyoddha and Farashganj want to settle in-house problems before committing.

Abahani meet Badda

FROM PAGE 17 Wajed Gazi, Abu Yusuf, Mohammad Faruq and Maruful Haque who would be eager to use all their guiles to upset the big names.

The Senior Division clubs, however, will face a big problem of playing two tournaments -- the League and the Club Cup -- simultaneously, which could well see one team playing three matches on consecutive days.

The tournament will also mark two national players' comeback to competitive football after missing an entire season due to injury, centre-back Mohammed Sujan for Abahani and Muktiyoddha goalkeeper Aminul Haque, who, however, returned to top-level action last December, playing for

Mohammedan as a guest player in a three-match series against Abahani.

With the transfers for the new season coming soon, the tournament could well become a stage for the clubs to look for their future.

It would also give the promising players a chance to impress in key positions in absence of foreign players with Mohammedan and Muktiyoddha each having just one overseas player and Badda two.

Each of the eight clubs get Tk 50,000 as appearance money while co-sponsors Walton and G Hanz will give awards for best spectators, best player, best organiser and best referee.

Gallery tickets will cost Tk 100 (VIP), Tk 30 (west) and Tk 20 (east).

GROUPS

A: Mohammedan, Arambagh, Victoria, Youngmen's. B: Abahani, Muktiyoddha, Wanderers, Badda.

FIXTURE

Jan 30: Abahani v Badda (6pm)
Jan 31: Arambagh v Victoria (3pm), Muktiyoddha v Wanderers (5pm).
Feb 1: Mohammedan v Youngmen's (5pm)
Feb 2: Muktiyoddha v Badda (3pm), Abahani v Wanderers (5pm)
Feb 3: Arambagh v Youngmen's (3pm), Mohammedan v Victoria (5pm)
Feb 4: Badda v Wanderers (3pm), Abahani v Muktiyoddha (5pm)
Feb 5: Victoria v Youngmen's (3pm), Mohammedan v Arambagh (5pm).

BCB hands over some grants

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Cricket Board handed over grants to the participating clubs of the Dhaka Metropolitan Premier Division and First Division Leagues at a simple ceremony at its management office in Gulshan yesterday.

The cricket board gave fifty per cent of the grants.

Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan (CCDM) chairman Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu handed over cheques worth Tk 3,75,000 each to the six top finishers of last season's Premier League.

CCDM member Tariqul Islam, cricket secretary of Mohammedan M Hanif Bhuiyan and Sonargaon Cricketers' president Wasif Rafiq received the cheques on behalf of their clubs.

BCB media committee chairman Ahmed Sajjadul Alam Bobby was also present.

Dhaka clinch DC Gold Cup

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Mamun and Domeni scored one each as Dhaka won 2-0 against Rajbari to clinch the DC Gold Cup football competition at the Shaheed Miraj-Tapan Stadium here yesterday. The winners led the first-half 1-0 through the Mamun strike.

Domeni added the second late in the second-half. Commander of 81st Infantry Brigade of Sagar Cantonment Brig Gen MM Salehin distributed prizes among the winners as chief guest. Manikganj DC Ataur Rahman, Lt Col Fakhrul Ahsan, Police Superintendent Imtiaz Ahmed, DSA secretary SMM Iqbal Hossain were also present.

Gyan's home

FROM PAGE 20 The crowd's reaction was markedly different at the Ohene Djian stadium on Monday. Gyan was cheered the loudest when his name was read out by the stadium announcer going through the team line-ups, and his every move encouraged.

Ghana's last eight match against the Group B runners-up takes place in Accra on Sunday.

Juve complete

FROM PAGE 20 Juve, third in Serie A, signed Lazio defender Guglielmo Stendardo on loan until June on Monday and also announced that Aston Villa's Olof Melberg would be joining the club in July.

Sissoko's move was also due to be sealed on Monday but was delayed slightly. The fee will be paid in three instalments and could rise by a further two million euros depending on Juve's performance.

Bangla Games

FROM PAGE 17 coordination committee chairman Mizanur Rahman Manu, deputy secretary general and accommodation committee chairman Imtiaz Khan Babul, deputy secretary general Ashrafuddin Ahmed Chunnun and COO Col (ret) M Waliullah were also present. Ashrafuddin Ahmed Chunnun was named Chef de Mission of the Bangladesh contingent and Anisur Rahman Dipu the general team manager.

The Bangladesh team have trained for three months and the hosts have received US dollars 20,000 from the Asian Olympic Council for the event.

The nine disciplines are: Athletics, swimming, shooting, basketball, volleyball, kabaddi, kho kho, football and cricket.

The West Bengal team are due to arrive in Dhaka on February 20.

Wenger slates

FROM PAGE 20 "You can suffer in the next game as you travel, you come back, you need time to adjust and you switch off when you are away to a different country. So the focus could go a little bit and you can suffer."

Whether United's focus has been affected will become clear when Ferguson's men entertain Portsmouth at Old Trafford on Wednesday. By then, Arsenal could be three points clear at the top of the table with Wenger's men facing Newcastle at the Emirates, 24 hours earlier.

Both clubs are still aiming for silverware on three fronts but something will have to give when they meet in the 5th round of the FA Cup at Old Trafford on February 16th or 17th.

Teammates

FROM PAGE 20 "Anyone can have good or bad times but we always have to remember that the important thing is the good of the team," he added. "Milan started the season really badly and now we're trying to recover, with the help of everyone, also with Gilardino's help who came on to score the winner against Udinese."

A win would see Milan move above Sampdoria into sixth place and close to within three points of fifth-placed Udinese. Reggina could put some daylight between themselves and the relegation zone if they pick up the three points.

NZC slated over Bond

Cricket

CrucINFO, undated

Heath Mills, the executive manager of the New Zealand Cricket Players Association (NZCPA), has expressed disappointment at New Zealand Cricket's (NZC) decision to terminate Shane Bond's contract and called on the authorities to address the situation to avoid international cricket being devalued. He has also accused NZC of acting to appease the Indian board.

Mills said that Bond's contract with NZC allowed him to play for third parties when his NZC commitments allowed, and that there were no restrictions on what events he could participate in. "Three months ago Bond sought and was granted consent by NZC to sign with the Indian Cricket League (ICL) in line with his playing contract," Mills said. "Further to that Bond ensured his ICL contract released him for international duties if required."

"In this way his ICL contract did not affect his ability to play for New Zealand or impact on international cricket. NZC has become increasingly concerned at the implications should they select Bond, or any other player, to represent New Zealand if they

are contracted to the ICL. These concerns principally relate to NZC's relationship with the Indian board (BCCI) and perceived risks to future revenue streams should the BCCI take a stand against NZC given the ICL is not sanctioned by that organisation."

NZC has also recently been made aware of an ICC operating manual regulation that purports to not allow them to release players to participate in non-sanctioned events. However, Mills said this regulation formed no part of the contracting arrangements with players and had never been communicated to them by the ICC or NZC.

"It has no application within the current player contracting arrangements between NZC, the NZCPA and the players. Attempting to retrospectively introduce and impose a regulation which amounts to a restraint of trade is simply unfair and inappropriate, and it compromises the freedom of contract that is preserved for our players under their agreements."

"The NZCPA fully understands the position NZC has found itself and we do not want them to damage relationships with the BCCI and other ICC members. However, pressure to preserve these relationships should not be placed above preserving New Zealand's right to select its best players to represent

the Black Caps, the rights and aspirations of New Zealand citizens to represent their country and the legal rights of players under their signed playing contracts."

"Given the issues Bond has decided to stand aside from international cricket at NZC's request. The NZCPA supports this decision as it enables him to preserve a strong relationship with the board of NZC in the hope that he can again contribute to the game in New Zealand at some stage in the future. However, this is not a decision that he was compelled to make and under our contract system negotiated with NZC it remains open for any player to play for a third party like the ICL and still remain contracted to and play for NZC."

"It is this situation that leaves the NZCPA concerned for cricket in New Zealand. We urge the ICC to step in and attempt to influence this situation and find a way to manage third party investment in our sport before we lose more players both here and around the world, and international cricket has been damaged further. History has shown that professional sports cannot afford to become split. It is absolutely vital that international cricket remains the pinnacle of the sport and that we ensure the best players are playing."

Lee the unsung hero

Cricket

PETER ROEBUCK

Brett Lee was the difference in a hard-fought series. While India's pace attack nursed injuries, Lee steamed in with long spells of skill and unflinching pace, bursts that camouflaged the thinness of the rest of the attack.

His was the decisive influence in a series dominated by batsmen that included 11 hundreds. He took 24 wickets at 23 apiece, impressive figures secured in hot conditions, on slow pitches, against fine batsmen and with the umpires intent on shaking their gory locks. Overall, he has taken 40 wickets in six Test matches this campaign.

Ricky Ponting possessed the most lethal bowler in the series. He could throw the ball to Lee with confidence. Lee used the crease resourcefully, his slower ball effectively, his bumper sparingly and his outswingers frequently. Stuart Clark bowled admirably until the last match, whereupon he looked lacklustre. Mitchell Johnson did well enough to deserve further opportunities without ever looking likely to run amok. Shaun Tait was out of sorts in his single match.

India prospered when the ball swung. Anil Kumble's pacemen were effective in Perth because the new ball swung and early wickets were taken against a batting order missing its most imposing and abrasive member. Elsewhere, they struggled to make a lasting impact. By the end of the series, India's four senior speedsters were on the physio's table. All of them should be forced to undertake a rigorous rehabilitation program at a facility in a remote

desert and run by a bad-tempered 82-year-old with cold hands.

Nor could Kumble put complete faith in his own bowling shoulder or an off-spinner whose doosra troubled only the home captain. By the fourth Test, Virender Sehwag was out-bowling Harbhajan Singh. Not that the Australian tweekers were threatening. Brad Hogg batted well but did not take his chance with the ball.

That he was lightly used on the last day in Adelaide told the tale. Andrew Symonds's seamers were more dangerous than off-breaks often directed wide of the sticks. Michael Clarke's action has improved, and with luck he might have taken more wickets. Bryce McGainis was worth a look.

Although Australia played well enough to deserve a narrow victory, the Indians had only themselves to blame. They arrived with high hopes but were undone by poor preparation. Rain ruined their only warm-up match, and they went into the MCG Test with the wrong side and still searching for their antipodean feet. Defeat was almost inevitable as an efficient home side pursued tight tactics and poured through every opening.

Obviously, the contentious SCG Test soured the atmosphere between the sides. Interpretations of events varied, and the ensuing frenzy in both countries suggested deep-rooted and long-held emotions had been released.

It was a telling moment as both cricketing nations confronted their demons. The blue between Harbhajan and Symonds could have been contained. Alas the captains were not able to sort it out between themselves. The gesture that started the spat was friendly, and the pity was

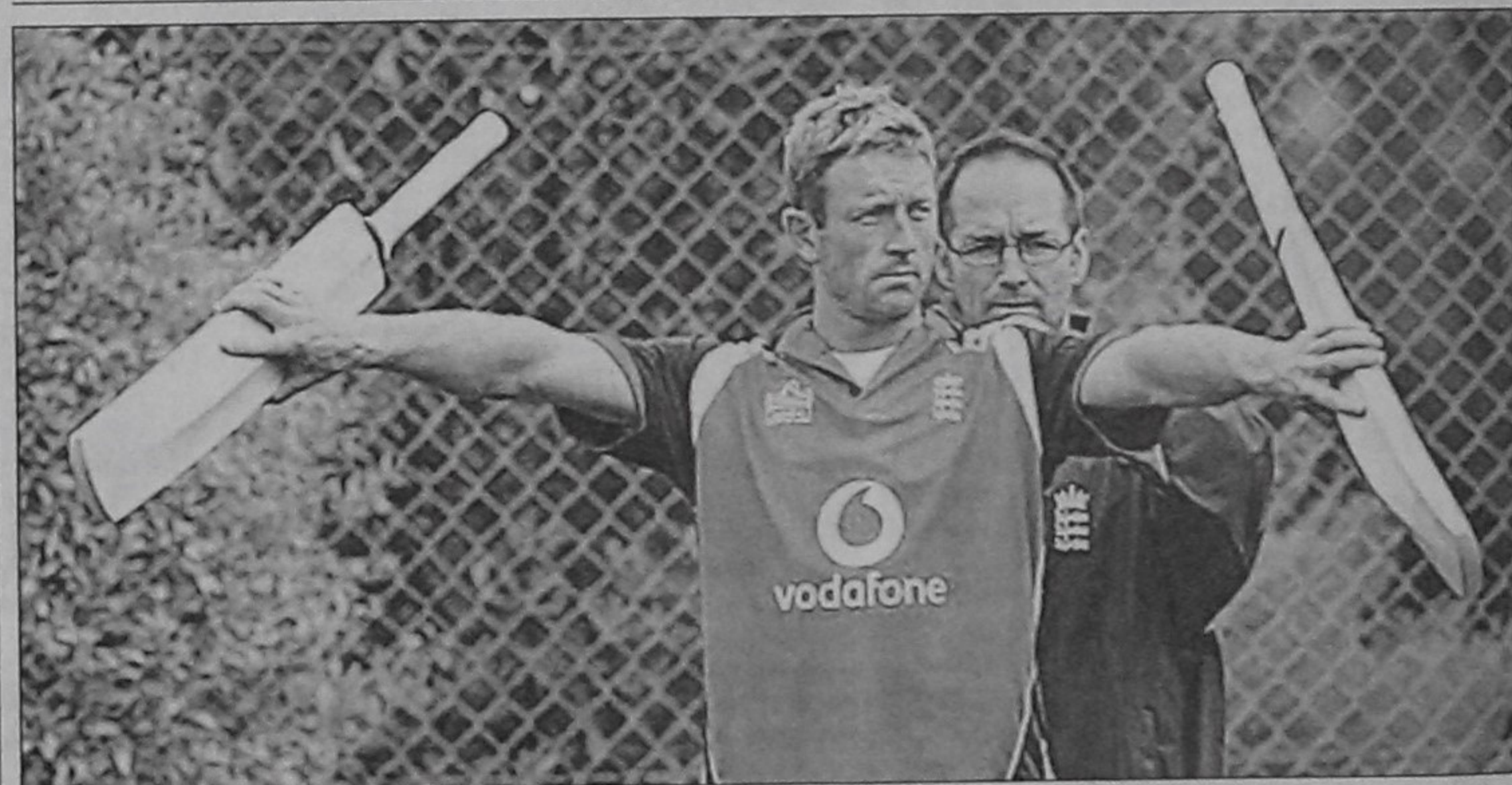
that provocateurs and hot-heads thereafter took over. Happily, the leading thinkers in both countries tackled the difficult task of putting their own houses in order, thereby avoiding the usual nationalistic apportioning of blame. Thereafter the captains decided to work together following an initiative taken by an impressive visiting leader. The consequent abandoning of the agreement on low catches was sensible.

But the stoush did not cause the defeat. Abysmal umpiring did not help but India should have saved the match. One shocking decision and a rash of feeble strokes cost them the match. Foolish selections also undermined the visitors. Yuvraj Singh played too much and Virender Sehwag too little, a point confirmed by the latter's match-saving hundred yesterday. Irfan Pathan missed the first two Tests but proved his worth with a man-of-the-match showing in Perth.

By and large, the series was compelling. Sachin Tendulkar found his form, Adam Gilchrist waved goodbye and some scintillating cricket was played. Ishant Sharma was an especially popular newcomer. Only the lamentable over rates caused frowns. And the series ended as it began, with Lee charging to the crease, giving his everything.

A month ago, Test cricket was supposedly dead. Australia could not find worthwhile opponents. Crowds were not interested. Newspapers agreed. Cricket has reclaimed its place in the life of this country.

(Revered cricket columnist Peter Roebuck wrote this piece on Sydney Morning Herald website)



ONE BAT NOT ENOUGH? England captain Paul Collingwood takes part in a new exercise during his side's first practice in Christchurch on Tuesday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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