

T20 final may go to Lord's

CRICINFO, undated

Lord's and The Oval have been nominated as two of the main venues to host next year's ICC World Twenty20, with the England and Wales Cricket Board also recommending Lord's to host the final.

After being chosen as the hosts of the tournament, England have spent the past few months deciding on the venues to be used. The Oval has been chosen as a "preferred bidder" for the warm-ups, group and Super Eight matches and a semifinal.

"I am delighted that Lord's, a world-class venue with a famous history and tradition, has agreed to be recommended hosts," Steve Elworthy, the tournament director, said on Monday in Auckland. "I was privileged to be director for (the) ICC World Twenty20 2007 and thrilled at the success of the event which generated record crowds and also made broadcasting history in India with 1.4 billion viewers tuning in for the final."

"Now I am looking forward to the challenge of raising the standard of Twenty20 cricket even higher here in England and with Lord's as a nominated venue and The Oval as a preferred bidder -- as well as a third world class ground yet to be chosen -- we have already got off to a great start."

Keith Bradshaw, the MCC secretary and chief executive, added: "The MCC committee is extremely pleased, and I am personally delighted, at the ECB's decision to recommend that the final and other matches in the ICC World Twenty20 in 2009 be staged at Lord's. It is bound to be an exciting and major global event, and MCC looks forward to contributing to its success."

"MCC has supported Twenty20 cricket -- a form of the game which virtually every cricketer has played -- since the county competition started a few years ago. At Lord's, these matches have regularly attracted crowds of over 20,000, and I am looking forward to seeing the home of cricket full for the 2009 matches."

The ECB will recommend Lord's to the ICC at their meeting in Dubai on March 18.

ICL's British recruits out in the cold

CRICINFO, undated

Geoff Miller, England's newly-installed chief selector, has hinted that any England player who signs up for the rebel Indian Cricket League could go the same way as New Zealand's Shane Bond, who last month had his national contract terminated and now faces being cast into the international wilderness.

So far only four England players -- Chris Read, Vikram Solanki, Darren Maddy and Paul Nixon -- have taken the lucrative offer from the ICL and, of those, only Read had realistic prospects of resuming his international career. But Miller, in New Zealand with the one-day squad, suggested that the ECB would be making an example of them to prevent others from following the same path.

Contracts for the ICL are worth between £200,000 and £500,000, but the tournament is not sanctioned by the ICC -- unlike the forthcoming Indian Premier League, which takes place in April. Miller stopped short of saying that legal issues were behind his comments, but instead questioned the motivation of players who sign for the ICL.

"There are lots of factors to consider but if they have chosen to do that (join the ICL), what is the reason to do that?" he told The Guardian. "What's wrong with the England side? It is something you would need to discuss with the player but I would like to feel the players would not want to make that decision."

"I would like to feel those players would want to be with the England side," said Miller. "If it is detrimental to what happens in the changing-room that is paramount to me. I am big on atmosphere in the changing-room and creating a good spirit."

Drogba's

FROM PAGE 20

"Aside from the vote it was what was said that surprised me," added Drogba.

"We're all working for the African continent, there's a huge media presence in Ghana for a competition that was heavily criticised ten years ago."

"So there comes a time when we all have to pull together. I don't think this type of attitude honours Africa so I've decided to pull out of future elections for the Ballon d'Or."

"In my eyes this award has lost its value. I'm a simple player, the decision that I take doesn't hurt a lot of people."

"If I refused to go to Lome it was first for my teammates as you don't organise such an event just two days before a quarterfinal (Monday's game against Guinea)."

"I didn't go as well because of the son of Ulrich Stilleke (the former Ivory Coast coach) has died."

Drogba's Ivory Coast faced Egypt in the Nations Cup semifinals on Thursday.



England batsman Dimitri Mascarenhas whacks one of his four consecutive sixes off New Zealand off-spinner Jeetan Patel during the first Twenty20 match at Eden Park in Auckland yesterday.

Skipper pleased with vital victory

CRICINFO, undated

BBC ONLINE, undated

England skipper Paul Collingwood said his team's 32-run win over New Zealand in the first of two Twenty20 matches had been "massively important."

"We didn't perform too well in the ICC World Twenty20," he said after a result which improved England's record to four wins and eight losses in the format.

"We could have got a few more runs but did a lot of good things and the bowlers were fantastic," he said. "It's a really good, positive start to the tour but we have to keep that up."

England comfortably defended a total of 184-8 on a good batting wicket, with the Black Caps losing their final wicket in the last over.

Dimitri Mascarenhas, who warmed up for the tour with a stint playing grade cricket in Perth, was man of the match.

He smashed four sixes on the trot off Jeetan Patel's off-breaks, and

then sending down four accurate overs in which he took 2-19.

Mascarenhas said: "It's always good to hit a few sixes, it's good fun, but more importantly it's good to get out there and get some runs because I hadn't had a bat yet on this tour."

"It helped that there was such a short boundary and I said to Colly (Paul Collingwood) that whoever was bowling I was going to go after him. He told me to back myself and I did."

"(Patel) bowled a few in the slot and they went out of the park."

"I always try to get myself in and we'd pretty much blocked out a maiden the over before so we needed to get some runs."

Disappointed stand-in captain Brendon McCullum, leading New Zealand in the absence of injured skipper Daniel Vettori, said: "It didn't go quite according to plan, but I think there's some positives we can take out of it as well."

"The way the young guys played on their debut was good and I'm sure they'll learn a lot from their outing today (Tuesday)."

Rain spoils

FROM PAGE 17

cricket -- it's just incredible. Only a genius can do these things, and he's a genius."

But on 35 Lasith Malinga got the vital breakthrough when Tendulkar chopped the ball onto his stumps.

Sehwag (33) was out shortly after when he gloved a ball down the leg side to wicketkeeper Kumar Sangakkara, giving an impressive Ishara Amerasinghe his first wicket in one-day internationals in his second match.

Sangakkara will be rueing a crucial miss when he dropped Gambhir off Amerasinghe when the Indian had scored only 11, spilling a difficult diving chance in front of first slip.

Sri Lanka replaced an out-of-sorts Vaas with celebrated off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran and enjoyed immediate dividends when he struck twice, dismissing Yuvraj (2) caught at first slip and two balls later Rohit Sharma for a duck caught behind.

Sharma risked attracting the wrath of the referee when he stood his ground, visibly upset with the decision by umpire Rudi Koertzen.

After weathering the storm, Dhoni and Gambhir exploded in the last 10 overs and smashed the ball to

all parts of the large Gabba ground.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of India innings in the second match of the triangular one-day international series against Sri Lanka at the Gabba on Tuesday:

INDIA					
Sehwag c Sangakkara b Amerasinghe	33				
Tendulkar b Malinga	35				
Gambhir not out	102				
Yuvraj c Jayawardene b Muralidaran	2				
Sharma c Sangakkara b Muralidaran	0				
Dhoni not out	88				
Extras: (lb-3, w-4)	7				
Total: (for four wickets in 50 overs)	267				
Fall of wickets: 1-68, 2-80, 3-83, 4-83.					
Did not bat: Uthappa, Pathan, Harbhajan, Sreesanth, Sharma.					

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Vaas	10	0	72	0
Malinga	10	1	56	1
Amerasinghe	10	2	30	1
Muralidaran	10	0	51	2
Kapugedera	6	0	23	0
Dilshan	1	0	8	0
Jayasuriya	3	0	24	0

SRI LANKA: Tharanga, Jayasuriya, Sangakkara, Jayawardene, Silva, Dilshan, Kapugedera, Vaas, Malinga, Muralidaran, Amerasinghe.
Result: Match abandoned.
Toss: India

Capello era

FROM PAGE 20

racist language to gee up Jose Antonio Reyes at then Arsenal colleague Thierry Henry's expense.

Aragones appeared this week on French television insisting he and Henry have no lingering 'problems'.

But few Spanish fans have forgotten his response to the Henry incident during the 2006 World Cup when he opened his multicultural heart by declaring he had "gypsy friends, black friends - and even a Japanese friend who sexes chickens!"

Domenech has named a joint senior and A squad of 36 for the France game and an A match against the Democratic Republic of Congo on Tuesday.

But he has snubbed veteran Juventus striker David Trezeguet, while retaining Chelsea new signing Nicolas Anelka, along with rising strike stars Hatem Ben Arfa and Karim Benzema of Lyon.

Midfielder Franck Ribery is out

after picking up a thigh injury in Bayern Munich's win at Hansa Rostock over the weekend.

Aragones may give a few minutes to 17-year-old Barcelona star Bojan Krkic Perez, although the youngster is battling a bout of gastro-enteritis.

The French will meet Italy again, as well as The Netherlands and Romania, in the finals, while Spain take on Russia, Sweden and holders Greece.

In other friendly tune-ups Germany travel to Austria with the former general manager, 1996 goalscoring champion Oliver Bierhoff, bawling a clutch of injuries to die Mannschaft's squad.

"There are so many injuries," lamented Bierhoff.

Among those who have had to cry off are Torsten Frings and Christoph Metzelder although skipper Michael Ballack returns from an ankle injury ten months after his last start.

Nat'l badminton from today

UNB, Dhaka

The Islami Bank 28th National Badminton Championships, organised by Bangladesh Badminton Federation, begins today at the Woodend Gymnasium.

Chairman of Islami Bank Prof Abu Nasser Mohammad Abdus Zaher will inaugurate the meet as chief guest.

A total of 228 male and female shuttlers from 56 teams will take part in the five-day meet.

The competition will be held in five events. The events are men's singles and doubles, women's singles and doubles and mixed doubles.

Sponsor Islami Bank will provide Tk 4.5 lakh out of the Tk 5.6 lakh total budget.

Tournament committee chairman Nurul Islam gave details of the championships at a press conference at the National Sports Council (NSC) yesterday.

Ataur Rahman, senior vice president of Islami Bank and joint secretary of federation Mariam Tareque were present.

Bidya Niketan clinch boys h'ball trophy

SPORTS REPORTER

Banani Bidya Niketan lifted the Sunnysdale 5th Boys Mini handball tournament beating Scholastica 7-4 in the final at the Handball Stadium yesterday.

The winners led the first half 2-1.

Earlier, Scholastica beat Bangladesh International School (BIS) 8-4 in the day's first semifinal while the eventual champions Banani Bidya Niketan crushed Play Pen 18-3.

In the 3rd place decider match, Play Pen beat BIS by 7-6 goals.

Prianshu Sarkar of BIS was adjudged player-of-the-tournament.

After the final, Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association (BSJA) president Monjurul Haque distributed prizes among the winners as chief guest while Sunnysdale principal Fazim Ahmed was the special guest.

Bangladesh Handball Federation general secretary Asaduzzaman Kohinor and tournament committee secretary Mizanur Islam were present on the occasion.

Malik denies

FROM PAGE 17

On Tuesday that the Siddiqui family had done fraud with them.

"Yes, Shoib had an affair with a girl named Ayesha on the internet. He wanted to marry her and Siddiqui claimed her as his daughter. But the photographs they showed of Ayesha to Malik was not that of their real daughter. They tried to commit a fraud with us," Imran said.

He said he and Malik have applied for Indian visas and will be going there soon to file a case for fraud against the Siddiquis.

England's flying

FROM PAGE 17

three for 16.

Mascarenhas also contributed to the run-out of New Zealand's second highest scorer Ryder as the home side's top order crumbled to six for 70 in the 10th over.

Oram's late fireworks, which saw him smack seven fours and two sixes, merely delayed the inevitable.

The only other batsmen to reach double figures were Ryder, who compiled 22, and Mills with a late 11.

The second Twenty20 game is in Christchurch on Thursday with the first of five one-dayers in Wellington on Saturday.

New Zealand and England play three Tests next month.

Cruising on a greasy road

CRICINFO, undated

Gautam Gambhir has been in and out of India's dressing room for some time now and should know what it takes to seal a permanent place. It hasn't always revealed itself -- he has not always made the most of his comeback opportunities -- but on Tuesday he set aside the disappointment of missing out on a place in the Test squad with his third one-day century, against Sri Lanka at the Gabba.

Gambhir had been in rich form in domestic cricket, leading Delhi to the Ranji Trophy title, with centuries in the semifinal and final.

That form was in evidence today in an innings where more impressive than the runs was the manner in which they were scored.

He was dropped when on 11, the disciplined Ishara Amerasinghe coaxing an edge that Kumar Sangakkara failed to hold on to, and made the most of the life. It was hard work; while Amerasinghe tested him with bounce and movement, he had to deal with the guile of Muttiah Muralidaran at the other end. Yet slowly, and surely, Gambhir found his way past both spin and pace.

He negated Murali by using his feet and hitting against the spin, and rotated the strike against Amerasinghe. "I wasn't picking him (Murali) early on but my plan was to hang in there and make sure we had a good partnership," Gambhir said about his initial jitters. By the end he was reading

Murali perfectly, and their personal tussle eventually read 32 runs off 30 balls -- including 11 off one over.

It was a vital phase for India, whose early advantage gained from a solid opening stand by Sachin Tendulkar and Virender Sehwag was swiftly negated when Yuvraj Singh and Rohit Sharma fell in Murali's first over. For a while it seemed India might lose their way as they did against Australia on Sunday, Gambhir, who had played around an angled one from Mitchell Johnson when on 39, decided to make amends and was helped by the presence of his captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni, whose calm and sense of responsibility was the perfect foil.

They also showed they knew the importance of rotating the strike, taking a total of 71 singles and one of the sharpest fielding units in world cricket. By the end of the innings Sri Lanka's fielding was ragged, patchy shadow of the early brilliance and much of this was down to the intelligent batting. Gambhir later noted the team had done its homework on Australian grounds, which usually present an opportunity to convert the "singles into twos".

Stealing runs and rotating the strike are old Gambhir traits, as witnessed at the ICC World Twenty20 in South Africa last year where he was the tournament's second highest run-getter. His form, capped by 75 in the final against Pakistan, displayed a suitability for the shorter versions of the game.

Today, though, it didn't matter if India were going at less than six an over. At the 30-over mark they were 115; ten overs later 162 and the last

ten yielded 105 runs. It was like a perfectly worked out script, the urgency coming when most required. "At 80 for 4 we were never in a position to attack. We wanted to play safe without losing any wickets," Gambhir said.

That's the sort of tricky position Gambhir is used to for a personal reason: he's usually been on trial of sorts when he's walked in to bat. "The pressure that comes from playing for India is always like facing a trial," he said. His biggest challenge has been to deal with the conventional wisdom that he is a stand-in before the departure of Tendulkar and Ganguly.

Gambhir says he is less comfortable opening than at No. 3, a point from where he can build a strong platform for a late flourish. "I have always been comfortable in this position as I have played long innings here in first-class cricket. It allows me to anchor an innings as well as attack when needed."

In 13 ODIs at No. 3 Gambhir has an average of 42, which is much better than the 26 he averages while opening. He concedes he now has the responsibility of being India's No. 3 in ODIs but is up for it. "It's time to take on the responsibility, stand up and deliver."

On Monday Gambhir and other youngsters had a chat with Tendulkar about the role of every player in the side. "For me as No. 31 need to hang in there, take my time, pace the innings and stay till around the 45th over," Tendulkar has carried that responsibility throughout his career and is still learning. For Gambhir, still in the first flush of his career, it's not a bad lesson to learn.

Rohit fined for dissent

CRICINFO, undated

Rohit Sharma was fined 10 per cent of his match fee for dissent after being incorrectly judged caught behind for 0 off Muttiah Muralidaran at the Gabba. Sharma was the second India batsman to remain camped to the crease following his dismissal over the past six weeks, but his punishment was stronger than Yuvraj Singh's following an in-depth pre-series discussion on behaviour by Jeff Crowe, the match referee.

Crowe found Sharma, a first offender, guilty under section 1.3 of the ICC's code of conduct for "excessive, obvious disappointment at an umpire's decision and an obvious delay in leaving the wicket". The Sri Lankans were convinced Sharma had edged the ball to Kumar Sangakkara, but the replays showed Rudi Koertzen made a serious error.

After Shaun Tait's sudden withdrawal from the game, Australian selectors have realised the need to "rest" their other speedster Brett Lee, who will be used sparingly during the ongoing tri-series. Lee said he may get a rest at any time after the match against Sri Lanka in Sydney on Friday in the wake of Tait's surprise indefinite break to deal with physical and mental stress.

"I have bowled a lot of balls this summer and my workload has increased a fair bit. We'll have to wait and see (about a rest). I'm looking forward to playing in Sydney in front of my home crowd, and we'll see what happens after that." Coach Tim Nielsen said that even though Lee was the leader of the bowling attack, he needed to be kept fresh.

"His resilience has been outstanding, he is in such a great vein of form. That is why it is critical that we do give him a spell at some stage in order to increase his longevity for as long as possible," Nielsen said.

Sania snub

FROM PAGE 20

Bhupathi, who partnered Mirza to the mixed-doubles final at the Australian Open, said she may play in India in future.

"It is not a permanent decision," Bhupathi said. "It is only this year she will not play in India."

"She has really been pained by all that has happened in the last few months. It is really unfortunate. We want that she should have the right frame of mind when playing in tournaments."

Mirza had told reporters on Monday that he had been "advised by my manager not to play because a lot has been happening in the past few months."

"Every time I have played in India, there has been some kind of problem. So we just thought it was better not to play this time," she said.

"It is not an extreme reaction. The controversies have been going on for a long time. It is not easy to deal with such stuff."

"I have gone through great lows in the last few weeks. It has been difficult to stay focused."

With Mirza opting out, the focus at the Bangalore Open will be on Venus and Serena Williams, who are due to make their first appearance on Indian soil.

MSC owe fans

FROM PAGE 17

national captain Zakaria Pintoo tried to avoid the media but in the end, commented: "Mohammedan are not playing as they should have been after conceding a goal."

Arambagh defender Imdadul Haque Monu then changed the scenario of the game when he sent a backpass towards his own goal, giving substitute goalkeeper Mithul no chance to stop the equaliser in the 68th minute.

The crowd got more agitated and seeing no other option, the giant in Mohammedan woke up and they changed gear. Ararat Rony drilled a low shot into the net to put his side ahead two minutes later while Nigerian player Menjamin, who replaced Walid, made it 3-1 in the 90th minute.

However, Mohammedan's pride was hardly salvaged on an evening to forget despite the late heroics.

Earlier, Youngmen's recorded their first victory in the meet with a 34th minute strike from Rony and Komol's second half brace as

Victoria's winning streak ended.

TEAMS

MOHAMMEDAN: Shakil, Ararat, Biplab, Saikat, Nazir, Faisal, Monwar, Sentu, Asad, Rony and Walid (Menjamin).

ARAMBAGH: Piru (Mithul), Monu, Ramjan, Akram, Wahid, Liton, Karim, Juku, Imu, Domenic (Ridon) and Iddi.

Referee: Azad Rahman.

Tarun clinch

FROM PAGE 17

But on a sour note, the three-day transfer was marred by the Mosharraf Hossain Rubel incident that once again proved that the popular clubs have a stronghold even though their action seem to be bordering on the insane.

But it seems that speculation of a lacklustre bourse was indeed true as a player of Habibul Bashar's calibre had to wait till the final day to get a club.



Citycell CEO Michael Seymour poses with the winners and officials of the Twenty20 cricket festival that pitted the staff of the country's oldest cellular phone operators and took place at the Dhamondi Cricket Academy ground on Monday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	33 Play-ground game	51 Being, to Brutus	20 Young bloke
1 1940s headline word	34 Shriver of tennis	52 Command to Rover	23 Profit
4 "Star Trek" speed factor	35 Saled beyond endurance	53 Vast expanse	24 Eventual aces
8 Arrived	36 Angle (Abbr.)	54 Equine coloration	25 Peruke
12 Away from WSW	37 Raw rock Dress-code	55 Unfriendly coloration	26 Prep for battle
14 Tel-additive	38 Concept	56 Disloyalty	27 Future bloom
15 Remnant	39 Below "Cheers" coloration	57 Ricochet, in billiards	28 Ostrich's kin
16 Portrayal	40 Diamond club	58 Disloyalty	29 Hiccup
18 Plant symbolizing the Crucifixion	41 Depth's offering	59 Equine coloration	30 Hiccup
21 Will Ferrell movie	42 Catesian conclusion	60 Disloyalty	31 Frolics
22 Catesian conclusion	43 "Fubged-dubodit!"	61 Disloyalty	32 Orange
23 "Fubged-dubodit!"	44 Concept	62 Disloyalty	33 Play-ground game
26 Continue orally	45 Below "Cheers" coloration	63 Disloyalty	34 Shriver of tennis
27 Command to Rover	46 Below "Cheers" coloration	64 Disloyalty	35 Saled beyond endurance
30 Satan's specialty	47 Below "Cheers" coloration	65 Disloyalty	36 Angle (Abbr.)