



A medal winner of this year's 2nd Indo-Bangladesh Games receives a prize from Bangladesh Swimming Federation president and Navy Chief Vice Admiral Sarwar Jahan Nizam at the National Sports Council (NSC) Tower yesterday.

Kirby struck in the head

BBC ONLINE, undated

Gloucestershire's Steve Kirby was taken to hospital after he was struck on the head by a short ball in the season opener between the MCC and Sussex.

The fast bowler was knocked out for 30 seconds after attempting to evade a delivery from Luke Wright at Lords.

Kirby was treated on the field before he was forced to retire hurt and the MCC were bowled out for 205 soon after.

Sussex made a bright start to their second innings, reaching stumps at 174-2 with Chris Nash unbeaten on 82.

The opener struck eight fours in his innings and is 18 runs short of his maiden first-class century, sharing stands of 75 and 76 with Carl Hopkinson and Michael Yardy to give the county champions a 140-run lead.

However, the second day's play was dominated by Kirby's horrific blow to the head.

The quick thinking of Sussex captain Chris Adams and wicketkeeper Matt Prior, who moved Kirby in the recovery position, helped him regain consciousness.

The 30-year-old was treated on the pitch by England and Wales Cricket Board physiotherapist Steve McCaig, who accompanied the tail-ender back to the pavilion.

But Kirby passed out for a second time in the home dressing room and was soon taken to the nearby Royal Free Hospital in Hampstead, where he will be kept overnight for observation.

"Typical Kirbs, he wanted to go back out and continue batting, then have a bowl," said MCC coach and ECB performance director David Parsons.

"We think he's okay but sent him to hospital as a precaution."

The day began in the worst possible fashion for Owais Shah, who failed to add to his overnight score of 72 in chilly conditions in north-west London.

The England hopeful top-edged a pull off Wright, safely caught by Ryan Harris.

Essex wicketkeeper James Foster edged an outswinger off Robin Martin-Jenkins to Hopkinson at third slip, handing the bowler his 300th first-class wicket.

And leg-spinner Will Beer claimed his maiden first-class wicket, ending Arun Harinath's two-and-a-half hour innings of 33.

Australian Harris took his fourth wicket of the innings, trapping Durham's Graham Onions leg before with a full swinging delivery.

And James Treadwell's stubborn innings of 21 was ended in similar fashion by medium-pacer Ragheb Aga.

Hall to contest ECB decision

CRICINFO, undated

Andrew Hall will appeal against the ECB's decision to decline his registration for the 2008 season. The board refused to use its discretion to allow him to turn out for Northamptonshire as he had played for South Africa in August.

Andrew Fitch-Holland, who represents Hall, told Cricinfo that the appeal would be lodged after the weekend. The hearing, which will be in front of a three-man panel, has to take place within 28 days, during which time Hall will not be allowed to play.

A lawyer representing the ICL, Jeremy Roberts, told the BBC that the players whose registrations had been declined would appeal to the ECB, and if their appeals were unsuccessful then court action was inevitable.

Fitch-Holland added that the ECB had been unable to give any clarification whether the same issues of registration would arise in 2009 with players who turned out for the ICL after the end of the current season.

Shaun's desire

CRICINFO, undated

Shaun Marsh has set his sights on emulating his father Geoff and becoming an opening batsman for Australia in Test and one-day cricket. Marsh was handed his first Cricket Australia contract on Wednesday and with Matthew Hayden and Phil Jaques the only specialist openers in the 25-man squad, he knows a top-order spot could soon be there for the taking.

Chris Rogers, who filled in for Hayden in the Perth Test in January, was axed from the list and there is also no obvious replacement for Adam Gilchrist as an ODI opener. James Hopes and Michael Clarke have performed the role on occasions, but the inclusion of Marsh in the limited-overs squad to tour West Indies indicates he is in the running.

Andrew Hilditch, the chairman of selectors, said the panel believed Hayden and Jaques had formed such a good Test pairing that a specialist backup was not necessary. They also considered Marsh a potential replacement if required.

"Jaques has grasped his opportunity to open the batting very well, while we've taken the view that Hayden will see his way through to the next Ashes tour of England in 2009," Hilditch said in the Australian. "I'd like to think that was achievable, while on the other hand I'd also like to think a Shaun Marsh, Simon Katich or Brad Hodge could put their hand up if the occasion arose."

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with Hayden, 36, approaching the end of his career, Marsh is keen to try his hand as an opener.

"Obviously in the next few years it is going to change up there, and it is a position that is going to open up," Marsh said. "It is something I want to do." His Western Australia coach Tom Moody said it was likely Marsh would be bumped up the Warriors order next season.

"He is not stupid," Moody said. "He realises that with Hayden getting to the stage where he is at in his career, and Phil Jaques still cementing his position, he sees there is an opportunity at the top of the order more than in the middle order. He's a player that has come along enormously in the past 12 months and could easily walk into the opening position, so we will just move the middle order around."

An agonising wait

CRICINFO, undated

Brad Haddin never made a point of standing by the phone at selection time. Better not to think about it, he thought, and be pleasantly surprised should the call come. Such was life in the shadow of Adam Gilchrist, perhaps the greatest keeper-batsman to pace the earth.

These days, however, both Gilchrist and shadow have left the scene, and Haddin has barely let the phone out of his sight. Though the world's cricketing cognoscenti were in agreement that the NSW gloveman would be elevated to the Australian Test squad for the tour of the West Indies, Haddin himself could not quite bring himself to believe it. Not without the call.

"That has never happened to me before," he said. "Usually, I just go about my business, and if the call comes, it comes. But I was waiting by the phone all the time and, to be honest, I would have been a prick to live with for those two weeks. I just wanted to hear it officially: you've been named in the squad for the West Indies. I was on edge every time the phone rang. I was like a bear with a sore head until I got that confirmation."

"I think that's just my personality. I never really thought of myself as the second wicketkeeper in the country behind Adam. I was always thinking of ways to improve my game, and how to put pressure on

the top spot. There was always the realistic chance that if Adam had chosen to play on for a couple more years, I could have been overlooked entirely for a younger keeper. I'm not the sort of bloke who takes things for granted."

Only an untimely injury or the alphabetically superior Beau Casson can deny Haddin the honour of becoming Australia's 400th Test cricketer at Sabina Park next month. Certainly, he deserves a prominent place on the list. For precious few of his 399 predecessors can claim to have served a more thorough apprenticeship.

Had he been born in another country, Haddin's CV would boast far more than 29 one-day internationals and four Twenty20s. And had he played in another era, his three successive seasons with a 50-plus first-class batting average -- coupled with a dedication to glovework that borders on the obsessive -- would almost certainly have been rewarded with a Test call-up sooner.

Haddin, though, is not one to dwell. His focus is on the West Indies tour, and the baggy green cap that has eluded him for a decade. In fact, so determined is he to establish himself at Test level, he has turned down the chance to play in the Indian Premier League -- and a pay day that would have swamped any he has previously known -- to stay in Sydney and train under coach Steve Rixon.

"It's not that I'm against the IPL," he said. "I just thought that I

had put a lot of work to get to this point heading into the West Indies tour, and I wanted that to be my sole focus over the next six weeks. I didn't want to take any chances. I guess it was a bit of a case of tunnel vision, because I didn't want anything else to get in the way of me playing Test cricket."

"It was flattering to hear what some people thought I might have earned in India, and for the guys who are more established than me, I think it's great that they'll be playing over there. But for me, it wasn't a money decision. It just didn't sit right."

Discipline comes easily these days, but it wasn't always so. Earlier in his state career, Haddin's mind was cluttered with thoughts of frustration and envy.

"It probably hit home about five years ago, when I knew I was just thinking too much about playing for Australia and allowing myself to get affected by it when blokes came back to NSW from the Australian side," he said. "It was probably detracting from my performances. Gilly was just starting his career then. There wasn't much I could do about it."

"I had to take everyone else out of the equation and make sure my form and stats were irresistible when the chance came around."

So it has proved. Haddin will complete the transition from understudy to the premier wicketkeeper in the land next month. At 30, the journey begins.

Records tumble in Manchester

CRICINFO, undated

Croatia's Dujie Draganja edged out home favourite Mark Foster to smash the world 50m freestyle best as records tumbled at the world short-course swimming championships here Friday.

Zimbabwe's Kirsty Coventry took the individual honours with her third title of the meet, while Australia, cheered on from the stands by the legendary Grant Hackett, strengthened their position in the medals table by adding three more golds to their tally to close the third day of competition.

Despite a difficult lane one draw, Draganja powered home to deny Foster a seventh world crown in a new best for the blue riband event of 20.81.

The 26-year-old paid tribute to the veteran British star and he said: "I can only apologise to Mark for beating him in his own house."

Silver was ample consolation

from the 37-year-old, who admitted: "I've said all along he was the one to watch and I knew he'd fight all the way for gold."

Coventry insisted there's more to come after setting one of five world records to fall on another action-packed night.

The Zimbabwean Olympic medal favourite continued her stunning run of form in preparation for this summer's Beijing games by adding the 200m backstroke to the 100m backstroke and 400m medley titles, in the process shattering the world record by more than two seconds in 2:00.91.

"It's a great feeling," said Coventry, 24, after another awesome performance which saw her leave a high-class line-up trailing.

"My preparations for the Olympics are going really well and the buzz of setting world records just makes you want to break as many as possible."

"I'm pretty tired and my legs are sore but it's exciting. It's extra special because I've got some family in the crowd and it's the first time

they've seen me at such a big meet."

Felicity Galvez set the tone for Australia with a world best of 25.32 in holding off the strong favourite Hinkelien Schreuder of the Netherlands to claim gold in the 50m butterfly, shaving 0.01 of a second off the previous best that had stood for three years.

A disappointed Schreuder admitted: "I realise now I probably had a bit more to give."

Aussie team-mate Kylie Palmer dipped under the four-minute barrier to claim a championship record in winning the 400m freestyle as Romania's Camelia Potec and Britain's Joanne Jackson took silver and bronze.

"Having Grant Hackett watching was really exciting," Palmer said. "He wished me luck before the race which gave me a big boost."

And Shayne Reese made it a hat-trick of individual women's titles on the night for the green and golds as she came in ahead of Finland's Hanna-Maria Seppala in the 100m medley with the tireless Coventry adding a bronze to her haul.

Not in Aaron's wildest dreams

CRICINFO, undated

Aaron Redmond, the latest player to earn a call-up into New Zealand's ever-changing top-order, is hoping to make his tour of England more successful than his father did 35 years ago. Redmond was named in the 16-man Test squad and could become the eighth person to follow his father into New Zealand Test cricket if he makes his debut in the three-game series.

Rodney Redmond played one Test and was highly successful, scoring 107 and 56 against Pakistan in Auckland in 1972-73. However, he then struggled to adjust to new contact lenses on the visit to England later that year and managed only 483 runs at 28.41 and had to settle for being remembered as a one-Test wonder.

The younger Redmond learnt of his call-up at his father's house in Perth and he said it was a special moment for the family. "A big smile came over his face and he chuckled out his hand to congratulate me and opened up a bottle of red wine to celebrate," Redmond told the Otago Daily Times.

Redmond was en-route from New Zealand to England, where he was planning to play league cricket for Wigan, when the phone-call came from the chairman of selectors Richard Hadlee. "It is something you always dream about, but it has definitely come as a surprise," Redmond said. "My initial goals were hopefully to get the opportunity later down the track."

"But to get the call [on Saturday] and be told it has come a little bit earlier, it just wasn't in my wildest dreams. It's one thing getting the chance -- now I've got to make the most of the opportunity."

Redmond's elevation came after a solid State Championship season during which he made 447 runs at 40.63 for Otago. However, he said it was "bitter-sweet" that his promotion came at the expense of his domestic teammate Craig Cumming, who was left out of the squad after being one of four openers used by New Zealand in the past six months.

"I'm great friends with Craig and he has played some awesome cricket this year and is a great player," Redmond said. "I'm sure it won't stop him. You have your good and bad times in cricket and I know he'll bounce back."

Akram's mother passes away

SPORTS REPORTER

Hazra Khatun, mother of former Bangladesh cricket captain Akram Khan, breathed her last in Dhaka in the early hours of Saturday. She was 75.

She had been suffering from prolonged illness with various old age complications.

Hazra Khatun was buried at the family graveyard in Chittagong after her prayers yesterday.

Bangladesh Cricket Board condoled the death of Hazra Khatun and expressed their deepest sympathy to the family members.

Cricketers Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWAB) also condoled the demise of Akram Khan's mother and prayed for the salvation of her departed soul.

Ganguly's gutsy

FROM PAGE 17

Jaffer lbw b Morkel 15

Steyn lbw b Steyn 8

Dravid b De Villiers b Morkel 29

Laxman b Morkel 50

Ganguly c Amla b Steyn 87

Yuvraj c De Villiers b Harris 32

Dhoni st Boucher b Harris 36

Harbhajan lbw b Steyn 32

Chawla c Smith b Ntini 4

Sreesanth not out 9

Sharma not out 16

Extras: (b-8, lb-4, nb-3, w-1) 10

Total: (For nine wickets in 88 overs) 288

Fall of wickets: 1-18, 2-35, 3-113, 4-123, 5-188, 6-248, 7-268, 8-279, 9-279.

Bowler O M R W

Steyn 16 1 60 3

Ntini 19 6 41 1

Morkel 13 1 57 3

Harris 29 7 89 2

Kallis 9 1 23 0

Amla 2 0 6 0

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BCCI plans pace unit

CRICINFO, undated

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is getting ready to start its first-ever pace bowling unit at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bangalore from June.

"There are a lot of plans, and the pace bowling unit is one of them," Ratnakar Shetty, the BCCI's Chief Administrative Officer, told Cricinfo. "India's reputation as a team with some of the most promising fast bowlers currently in world cricket is one of the main reasons why we were very keen to set up this unit this year itself."

The pace wing will focus on a pool of around 20 bowlers who may be identified in consultation with the national selectors and will be coached for an initial stint of four months. To start with, the fast bowlers will train with India's "fringe players" who will be at the academy for a camp of two months this summer.

Venkatesh Prasad, India's bowling coach, will be consulted on various aspects of the pace unit, but the NCA is also looking to hire a

full-time head coach. It's learnt that Bharat Arun, the former Test medium-pace bowler, has emerged as a leading candidate for the job. The NCA is also looking to utilise the services of John Harmer, the former Australia women's coach and a biomechanics expert, as a consultant.

Shetty said that the academy would also start a parallel biomechanics unit with inputs from the Centre of Excellence in Australia. "Ravi Shastri [the NCA chairman] and Dav Whatmore [the director] feel the NCA has to be a complete, fully-equipped institute," Shetty said. "Already, the presence of Paul Chapman and Paul Close [physio and trainer] has made a huge difference. Indian cricket has not seen anything like this before."

India's fast-bowling attack has played a crucial part in some of the team's major victories over the last two years starting with the 1-0 Test series win in West Indies that was spearheaded by the right-arm duo of Sreesanth and Munaf Patel. Sreesanth followed it up with an 18-wicket haul during the three-Test series in South Africa, which saw India win its first Test in that country.

Last year, left-arm fast bowlers Zaheer Khan and RP Singh played a key role for India winning a Test series in England and then Ishant Sharma impressed in Australia early this year. RP got his name on the Lord's honours board with a five-wicket haul while Zaheer has been named in the Wisden Cricketers' Almanack as one of its Five Cricketers of the Year for the 18 wickets he took during the three-Test England series.

Zaheer, RP and Sreesanth are all products of the MRF pace academy in Chennai which has Dennis Lillee, the Australian fast bowling legend, as consultant. The privately-run academy has played a crucial role in shaping the careers and technique of Indian fast bowlers over the last two decades right from Jagajal Srinath to Irfan Pathan, although its efforts to tie up officially with the BCCI have failed. Now, the Indian board feels it's time it had a fast bowling unit of its own.

"We felt the time was just right to start the pace bowling unit," Shetty said. "There is more potential young talent in India, and we wish to groom them for the highest level and provide them with right guidance and coaching."

Amit in Test plans

CRICINFO, undated

Trinidad off-spinner Amit Jaggernauth will not be part of the one-day series between West Indies and Sri Lanka, but he is still very much part of West Indies coach John Dyson's plans.

"I would imagine that Jaggernauth would be part of the Test squad [against Australia]," Dyson said.

Currently the leading bowler in the regional Caribbean four-day series with 40 wickets, Jaggernauth was in the West Indies squad for both Test matches against Sri Lanka but did not play. But Dyson said the time he spent with the squad was not wasted.

"He's been impressive in the nets during the Test series," Dyson said. "And what we are aiming to do is to make sure he was exposed to the Test squad and also he had a good opportunity to watch Murali [Muttiah Muralitharan] at close range."

Dyson also made it clear that the search for spinners was going beyond Jaggernauth and Barbados left-arm spinner Suleiman Benn.

"There's the Challenge final still to come and that's an interesting match because there are a couple of spinners in that game," he said. "Jaggernauth will be playing in that game, so it's a good chance for him to press his claims even further. Just off the top of my head, we've had a look and a talk about [left-arm] Nikita Miller from Jamaica. And from all reports, he's worth having a good look at as well."

Dyson also said that the wider aim was to "build up our own knowledge of who's available around the Caribbean from all areas of the game. So we look at batsmen, we look at the fast bowlers, we look at the spinners, we look at the wicketkeepers, so that we're up to date with everyone hopefully."

Dyson, who took charge of the team for the first time on tour of South Africa in 2007-08, also explained how he was attempting to improve West Indies' perfor-

mances. "We've worked at making a positive, happy team environment," he said. "I think we're making good strides towards achieving that. And I think that when we get the guys in that sort of environment, when we support them throughout whatever happens in the matches, it's a better time for them to play cricket."

"We all know that they've got good skills. Believe it or not, they really do want to win and show the people of the whole Caribbean that they're out there doing their best for them. Sometimes it just doesn't go that way in the middle. But I think we are showing more consistently that we can be very, very competitive with everyone."

Dyson's work and words were endorsed by his captain, Chris Gayle.

"I enjoy working with him [Dyson]. He's a bit of fun as well," Gayle said. "Sometimes you do get a chance to laugh. It's been a good run so far. It's just to continue in the right vein. Communication is very good."

'England may be loser'

CRICINFO, undated

Dougie Brown, the chairman of the Professional Cricketers' Association, has warned that the majority of England's leading Test players might be lost to the Indian Premier League (IPL) if the English authorities try to force the likes of Andrew Flintoff and Kevin Pietersen to choose between the new tournament and representing their country.

Brown, who has investigated the IPL's finances and believes that the competition will be a massive success, has grown increasingly concerned over what he perceives as administrators in England sticking their heads in the sand and refusing to grapple with the true consequences of the IPL.

Citing as evidence a recent poll which revealed that nearly 50 per cent of Australia's best cricketers are apparently prepared to contemplate quitting the Test circuit if they are refused the opportunity to participate in the new Twenty20

tournament in India, whose initial contract lasts ten years, Brown has urged the world's cricketing bodies to thrash out a revised schedule which prevents the kind of schism which would make Kerry Packer's 1970s breakaway series seem trivial by comparison.

"The balance of power in the sport is shifting away from the ICC to the BCCI and England can't afford to lose all their best players to the IPL, but the players have families to worry about, mortgages to pay, and futures to consider, and you can't blame them for looking at the chance of being able to earn twice as much in a month as they could do in a whole year and concluding: 'I want a piece of that,'" said Brown.

"I think we have to be careful not to dilute Twenty20's appeal by setting up tournaments all over the world, because cricket has to keep coming up with fresh ideas and the last thing we need is for the calendar to feature half-a-dozen Twenty20 international events on it, because broadcasters aren't stupid. They know that the public will get behind the IPL,

because it is original and it is unique, and I have no doubt that we will see that the Indians turn it into a terrific success."

"But we have to fight to preserve the integrity of Test cricket, and to make sure that the game doesn't become one-dimensional. We are in danger of driving the best players away from the Test circuit if we are heavy-handed in dealing with them. This is bigger than Packer -- his WSC only lasted for three or four years, whereas the IPL will be with us for the next decade and we have to accept it will transform the face of cricket."

"So that is why it is so important that the ECB understands there has to be an even-handed approach to letting their best players perform in the IPL. If they simply refuse to let them perform in the Indian structure, that will set a very dangerous precedent, because big-name players, the kind of high-profile names who light up Test matches, will choose to walk away and focus exclusively on Twenty20. So this is a critical period for us all."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	43 Prevent	DOWN	24 Carnival city
1 Part of MIT	45 Silent performers	1 Bullet in board	25 Squid dish
5 Coll. transcript no.	47 Like melancholy music	2 Verve choice	27 Delty
8 Old card game	48 Musca's land	3 Pop	29 Gun
12 Loton additive	51 Mescal's	4 Throw hard	the engine
13 —di-dah	52 Black olive from Greece	5 Shimmer	30 Coloring agent
14 Domestic	54 oxide of iron	6 Zero-star review	32 More tranquil
15 Zinc mixture	55 Before	7 Wandering	33 Moved instead
17 Holly	56 Cauldron concoction	8 African desert	37 Round
18 Scala-wags	57 Eastern potentate	10 Prayer ending	Table address
19 Immoderate	58 Accomplished	11 Libretto	39 Big bash
21 Dine on	59 Charitable donations	16 Repeat	42 Re-quested
22 Platter		20 Eighteen-wheeler	43 Cuban
23 Joan of —		23 Regis and Kelly's network	ball-room dance
25 Journey segment	Solution time: 21 mins.		
26 Sentry	ACROSS	DOWN	46 Mosque
31 Prejudice	ENOUR CHIT HECK	1 SNAR HUT ASHY	VIP
32 Promptly	50 GRAB	2 GUM	48 Noble title
35 Country	ALL ONE	3 FUMS	49 Branch
36 Nat and Natalie	4 GOT GUY	4 GUY	50 Goes off course
38 Pooch	50 GOT GUY	5 GUY	53 Jackie's second name
40 "— been had!"	51 GOT GUY	6 GUY	
41 Met melody	TAXI MERRYMAN	7 GUY	
	AHEN HAD GMIT	8 GUY	
	RUNG HAS HOSE	9 GUY	