

Duo bothered us too: Arthur

CRICINFO, undated
A day after the Indian Premier League (IPL) banned Harbhajan Singh for slapping Sreesanth after a match in Mohali on Friday, it has emerged that the behaviour of both players had come under the scanner during the recent South Africa series in India, too.

Harbhajan had to apologise to Ashwell Prince, the South African batsman, for abusing him during the third Test of that series in Kanpur last month and the South Africans "lost a lot of respect for Sreesanth" when he went after AB de Villiers, Mickey Arthur, the South Africa coach, told Cricinfo.

Asked about the IPL incident, Arthur said he was not surprised because "when there are two such volatile players on the field, anything can happen."

Harbhajan was banned on Monday from the first season of the IPL after Farooq Engineer, the match referee, found him guilty of slapping Sreesanth. The BCCI has initiated a separate probe into the incident.

"At the end of the day, we are not squealers," Arthur said. "We strongly believe that what happens on the field stays on it. Besides, we were very happy with the general spirit in which the series was played in, and we left with very pleasant memories of the tour, especially the cricket that was played."

However, Arthur admitted that the behaviour of Harbhajan and Sreesanth during the India series "was not great" and said that the South Africans took up the Kanpur incident because Prince felt very strongly about it. "There was a hearing in Kanpur. There was a hearing by the match referee (Roshan Mahanama) during which Harbhajan apologised to Prince. It was settled and we were happy with the apology. I am not 100 per cent sure what was said. But Ashwell felt very strongly about it at that time and that's why we took it up," Arthur said.

Yusuf names

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committee select the captain.

Hassan Al Mamun, who led Bangladesh in the World Cup qualifiers, the country's last international matches, is expected to wear the armband again, but Yusuf hinted goalkeeper Aminul, who was captain before his yearlong injury, is also a contender.

"I chose the team independently but I feel as there is a new committee, it should name the leader," he added.

"I have picked up those players, who are capable to play throughout the 90 minute in line with my strategy. That is to go for attack and come down to defend all together."

"The first emphasis was on the players' fitness for three weeks and I am all but satisfied the way the players have responded to the task, said Yusuf, who rated hosts Kyrgyzstan as favourites. "I believe we can beat Laos and Afghanistan."

"We have always suffered for lack of match practice and this time, it is no exception. We should have played at least five practice matches in different situations before going to Kyrgyzstan, which could be difficult this time of year."

Hassan Al Mamun also mentioned lack of match practice as a barrier for success.

"Still, we are getting something before the SAFF Championship. It would be a good preparation but our target would be to qualify," said the fullback who was touring Malaysia with the second string national side when Bangladesh lost 3-0 to Kyrgyzstan in the Nehru Cup in India last year.

"I feel we are one striker short and also, we miss an attacking midfielder like Abul who was excluded for lack of fitness."

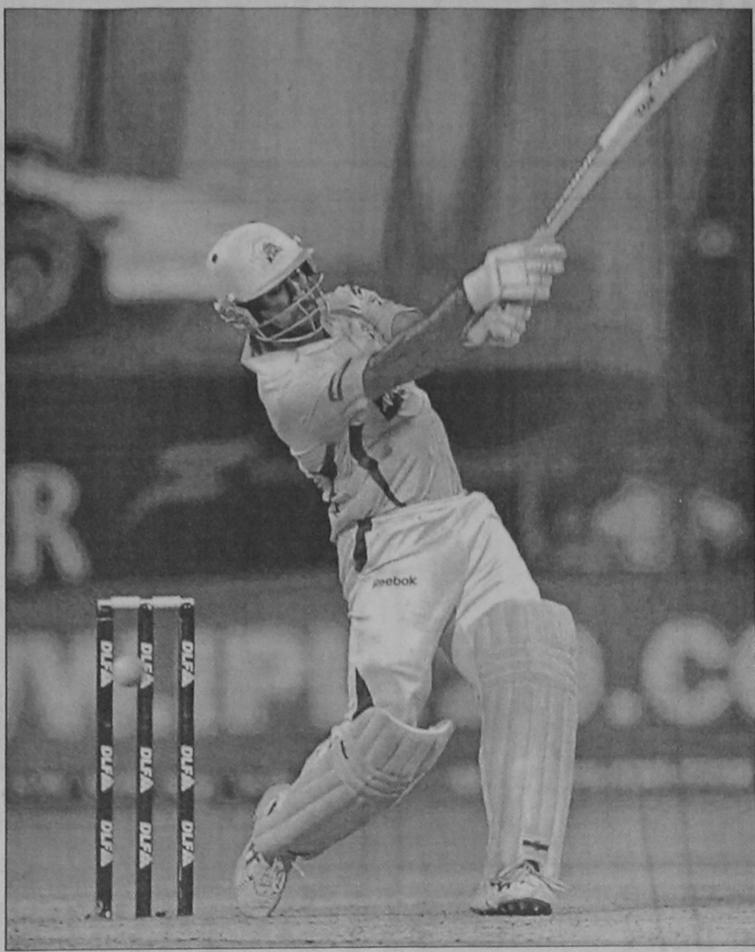
Injuries kept Abul out while Bangladesh have only three strikers including Ujjal, who have been playing as an attacking midfielder for club and national side for the last couple of years, beside Emily and young Robin.

BCCI probe

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influenced by the IPL's ban on Harbhajan, Navavati said, "As far as IPL is concerned, it is a trust created by the BCCI. The IPL's contracts with players and associated clauses are different from those signed by BCCI with its contracted players. Secondly, the IPL has made no rules of regulations of its own. In this case, they have only followed what the ICC or BCCI could have done in a similar situation. Monday's verdict by the IPL was a result of that."

"Mine is a fact-finding mission. I will only submit my report to the BCCI's disciplinary committee. I can come to the conclusion that Harbhajan is completely innocent or guilty to the extent found by IPL, or more guilty. But action, if any, will be taken by the BCCI panel."

Navavati will submit his report to the BCCI within the next 15 days, who will refer it to the board's three-man disciplinary panel comprising Sharad Pawar, the BCCI president, Shashank Manohar, the BCCI's president-elect and Chirayu Amin, the president of the Baroda Cricket Association.



Chennai captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni blasts one towards long-on during his match-winning 65 against Bangalore in the Indian Premier League at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore on Monday.

Dhoni devises win

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Dhoni scoring at a run a ball and Hussey striking only one boundary in his first 24 deliveries. With five overs to go the pair turned it on: Hussey struck B Akhil for consecutive sixes to take 14 runs off the 16th over and then he scored two boundaries off Kallis after which Dhoni launched the ball over long-off to take 16 runs off the 17th.

Dale Steyn had bowled three fast and economical overs but his fourth was a disaster. Dhoni clubbed two fours down the ground, edged one to the third-man boundary and powerfully hit a four and a six towards midwicket. He took 24 off the over and then drove and pulled Zaheer Khan for 14 off the first four balls of the final over before hitting out to deep cover. Chennai scored 76 runs off the last five.

Both teams eventually missed a specialist spinner in their line-ups. The pitch had pace and bounce, prompting Bangalore to bench Anil Kumble and Sunil Joshi and Chennai to replace Muttiah Muralidaran with Morkel. The inclusion of Steyn, who had just arrived after playing in the Standard Bank Pro20 Series in South Africa, was a fillip to the Bangalore attack and his mid-140kph pace made a world of difference at the start.

Steyn's pace and length forced Matthew Hayden to abandon his intimidating walk down the wicket and play him with caution. With Steyn proving difficult to get away, Hayden was forced to go after Zaheer: he tried to make room and smash him down the ground: The first attempt resulted in an inside-edge that ran past the stumps for

four, the second inside-edge the very next ball crashed into the stumps.

Parthiv struggled against the shorter balls, his attempt to hook Praveen Kumar's marginally slower pace resulted in a top-edged six. However, he steered the very next ball to Jacques Kallis at first slip; Suresh Raina began to increase Chennai's run-rate by pulling B Akhil and Praveen powerfully over midwicket for sixes but a mix-up with Hussey cut short his innings on 28 off 17 balls.

Although Hussey began to provide the initial acceleration during the last five overs, he was quickly overshadowed by Dhoni who mesmerised the appreciative Chinnaswamy crowd with tremendous power and improvisation. His 65 off 30 balls grabbed the initiative away from Bangalore and resulted in Chennai posting a match-winning total.

SCORES IN BRIEF
CHENNAI SUPER KINGS: 178 for 5 in 20 overs (Patel 21, Hayden 13, Hussey 47, Raina 28, Dhoni 65; Zaheer 3-38, Kumar 1-29)
BANGALORE ROYAL CHALLENGERS: 165 all out in 19.4 overs (Chipli 8, Jaffer 50, Taylor 53, Kallis 14, Boucher 4, Kohli 12, Dravid 0, Kumar 6, Zaheer 8, Akhil 2 not out; Gony 3-34, Morkel 1-38, Amarnath 2-38, Sharma 2-27)
Result: Chennai Super Kings won by 13 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Mahendra Singh Dhoni.
Umpires: BR Doctrove (West Indies) and RB Tiffin (Zimbabwe)
Toss: Chennai Super Kings.

Appeal to help footballer Mari

SPORTS REPORTER
The family of former footballer Ching Hlang Chowdhury Mari yesterday appealed to Bangladesh Football Federation and all sports lovers to come forward to help the diseased star of the yesterday.

Critically ill, Mari is now at Square Hospital in Dhaka and cannot take release for failing to pay his treatment bills despite being given permission to leave.

Bangladesh Olympic Association secretary-general handed over Tk one lakh as donation to his family on Monday but they have to pay further Tk 2,50,000 to take him home.

Shoaib sorry for actions

AFP, Lahore
Pakistani fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar has tendered an unconditional apology to a tribunal hearing his appeal against a five-year ban, the tribunal head said Tuesday.

The 32-year-old paceman was banned earlier this month for breaching the players' code of conduct by publicly criticising the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) after he was not offered a central contract in January.

The three-member tribunal, headed by retired judge Aftab Farooq, met here Monday and will meet again on Wednesday to take a decision on the maverick Akhtar's appeal.

"We expect many, many things from this committee because of its acceptability. Footballers and prominent organisers are there, so we are hopeful about a better future," said national fullback Hassan Al Mamun.

"However, there is also a dark side. If this committee cannot uplift the game, it will be an end for us. I don't see any other person outside this committee who can run the show better."

"All we want is to hold the professional league regularly, introduce district leagues and go to the grassroots. Also they will have to set a goal now to take Bangladesh to Asian level by 2020 or 2025."

"For players, bringing financial solvency is a must. Otherwise, the crisis will remain," said Hassan.

Stop

FROM PAGE 17
American troops in Baghdad, and that the Americans were 'committing suicide' by the hundreds at the city's gates.

Suffice to say it was al-Sahhaf's last contribution as the Information Minister.

Moral of this story is: Honesty is the best policy but a positive attitude is not always the best attitude. Sometimes we should let reality bite. Sometimes accepting reality rather than letting a delusional shower wash our worries away is the way to go.

Our Tigers (cats?) would do well to pay heed to that matter.

And in case they don't, there is always al-Sahhaf's fate to cheer them on. As happened with the Iraqi, we may next see Mohammad Ashrafu gain a cult following with his pictures being photo-shopped on posters of the D-Day landings and The Battle of Waterloo, all the while maintaining that all may be lost but there were 'definitely positives' to take from it.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Kalindi Krira Chakra earned an exciting one-wicket victory over Kakral Boys in the Second Division Cricket League at the City Club ground yesterday.

Winning the toss, Kakral Boys batted first to post 196 for in 47.4 overs with Anis making 47.

Chasing the moderate target, Kalindi rode on an unbeaten 68 by Sentu as they reached their target in 44.3 overs.

At the Fatullah Cricket Stadium, Prantik Krira Chakra outplayed Green Leaf by 64 runs. Batting first, Prantik scored 237-8 in 50 overs with Imran scoring 67. In reply, Green Leaf were bowled out for 173 in 45.3 overs. Didar took four wickets.

In the other match held at the Dhaka University ground, Farashgan Sporting Club (184-7) beat Rayer Bazar (182 all out) by three wickets.

DIVIII CRICKET
Half-centuries from Imran and Aminul throttled once giant GMCC to a two-wicket win over another former giant Azad Sporting Club in the Third Division Cricket League at the Gulshan Youth ground yesterday.

Aminul top-scored with 64 while Imran hit an unbeaten 55 as GMCC chased down Azad's 180 in 43.5 overs. For Azad, Rahat took five wickets for 29 runs.

At the Dhanmondi Club ground, Impel Group outplayed Dikusha by 77 runs. Opting to bat first, Impel posted 248-9 in 50 overs. Gopal top-scored with 59 runs. In reply, Dikusha were bowled out for 171 runs in 43 overs with Joy scoring 39 runs.

In the day's other match, Talent Hunt Cricket Academy (173 all out) beat Matuail Cricket Academy (159 all out) by 14 runs at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

RAJSHAHI TWENTY20 CRICKET

RU Correspondent: Jubo Cricket School defeated Nur Club by 151 runs in the Twenty20 Cricket tournament at the Divisional Woman's Sports Complex playground yesterday.

The cricket tournament was organised by Rajshahi Cricket Academy.

After winning the toss, Jubo School batted first and amassed 205-2 runs in 20 overs. Santu made highest score 86, Mustak 44 and Lalmon 40.

In reply, Nur Club lost their bearing and were bowled out for 54 runs in 12.1 overs. Shahajada took four for 22.

In another match, Baya Cricket School (106 all out) defeated Binodpur Cricket Academy (99 all out) by seven runs at the same playground.

DEAF ATHLETICS

The 13th Deaf Athletics competition, organised by Bangladesh Deaf Sports Federation, will begin at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on May 1.

Around 150 athletes from 18 clubs and schools will take part in the contest which will run till May 3.

Ministry of Social Welfare secretary MA Hai Hawlader will inaugurate the meet. The federation's general secretary Gazi Kamrul Hasan and National Sports Council secretary M Akbar Hossain will also be present on the occasion.

New EC

FROM PAGE 17
make sure that footballers are not neglected in the coming days. I congratulate the winners and also the councillors, who have chosen to vote for the men who love football," added the striker.

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AGM in Dubai: ICC

Cricket
AFP, London

The International Cricket Council (ICC) confirmed on Monday that its 2008 annual meeting in June and July will take place in Dubai, where the global governing body has its headquarters.

It means that for the first time in its 99-year-history, the ICC will hold its annual meeting somewhere other than London's Lord's Cricket Ground.

The change has been prompted by uncertainty over whether Zimbabwe Cricket (ZC) chairman Peter Chingoka would be admitted to Britain.

An ICC statement issued on Monday said the conference week, which will include meetings of the ICC chief executives' committee and the ICC board, would take place in Dubai from June 29 to July 4.

It added: "The annual conference week was originally scheduled to be held at Lord's in London. The decision to move the location to the United Arab Emirates was made by the ICC board on the basis that all delegates required to attend would be permitted entry."

British ICC president-elect David Morgan, who will take over from Ray Mall of South Africa at the

conference, told reporters at Lord's on Saturday: "He (Chingoka) applied to the British authorities in Harare to attend this year's annual conference."

"That visa has neither been granted or refused. The ICC at its last board meeting took a decision that if it wasn't certain that Mr Chingoka was going to be in possession of a visa by April 15 then the conference week would be relocated from here to Dubai."

England's hosting of next year's ICC World Twenty20 has been threatened by the British government's hardline opposition to the regime of Zimbabwe president Robert Mugabe and his ZANU-PF party.

However, Morgan said: "The ICC World Twenty20, in my opinion, will go ahead at the two grounds in London (Lord's and The Oval) and at Trent Bridge."

This meeting will be the first the ICC has held since it was announced that chief executive Malcolm Speed would be going on paid leave for the final two months of his contract.

The Australian is standing down following a "fundamental breakdown" between himself and several board members, including Mali, over the controversial issue of Zimbabwe.

Speed was particularly frustrated by the ICC board's failure,

following its March meeting, to take any significant action against Zimbabwe Cricket (ZC) after an independent forensic audit carried out by leading accountants KPMG raised questions about the state of ZC's finances.

His exit has again raised questions as to whether ICC can rise above the self-interest of its members and run world cricket effectively.

Cricket Australia chairman Creagh O'Connor, who said he regretted the departure of Speed, previously chief executive of the Australian Cricket Board, added in a statement: "Cricket is becoming a genuinely global sport and will only have a long-term, sustainable future if the diverse interests within the game can put the game's interests ahead of any other interests."

Earlier on Monday, former ICC chairman Malcolm Gray, who appointed Speed to his ICC post labelled his compatriot's exit as "disgraceful".

Speed will go on paid leave from April 30 until the end of his contract term on July 4.

David Richardson, the ICC's general manager, will serve as interim chief executive until fellow South African Haroon Lorgat takes over as planned as chief executive at the annual conference.

Ideas aplenty for EPL

Cricket
BBC ONLINE, undated

County chiefs are split on the make-up of a potential English Premier League as they prepare to meet in London.

The England and Wales Cricket Board holds its annual general meeting at Lord's on Tuesday, with the domestic game facing radical change.

Several counties are open to the idea of a new Twenty20 league made up of a handful of city-based franchises.

Others are opposed and Somerset chief Richard Gould told BBC Sport: "My aim is to knock this idea on the head."

While the EPL is not listed as an item on the agenda for the meeting at Lord's, it is still bound to be discussed.

And representatives from the 18 first-class counties will hold informal talks ahead of the meeting.

Surrey chief executive Paul Sheldon has mooted the idea of the

counties being regrouped into franchises such as "Vodafone London" in the wake of the creation of the Indian Premier League.

And Sean Morris, chief executive of the Professional Cricketers' Association, has admitted he doubts whether an EPL made up of the existing 18 counties would be a viable commercial proposition.

He said: "When you look at the broadcasting deal that will drive it and for sponsorship partners and for fans, does playing 18 teams really stack up?"

But Gould said a Twenty20 Premier League based on franchises would set the game on a slippery slope.

"We are hugely against regionalising -- that would lead, eventually, to the domestic game being reduced to eight regional franchises for all forms of the game," he said.

"I don't have a problem with an EPL as long as it involves the 18 counties. Otherwise it would drastically reduce the number of English-qualified players available."

"The Test-match playing grounds might benefit, because

they would host the matches but the rest of county cricket would not."

Leicestershire chief Neil Davidson agreed, telling BBC Sport: "Franchises would be a negative and could turn a lot of people off the game."

He added: "As long as the idea is a revenue generator that favours the game as a whole, I'm in favour."

"But we need to think about everyone, the minor counties, grassroots cricket and the Test-match grounds."

However, Lancashire chief Jim Cumbes says he could see the benefit of some counties merging to take part in an EPL.

"There's really no need for us to merge, or Yorkshire or a number of other counties, but I think it could work in some areas of the country where the counties are pretty close together," he told BBC Sport.

"We should be seriously looking at setting up our own Premier League. I could envisage two divisions, with promotion and relegation between the two, like the football Premier League."

"And I think it could happen as early as next year, with the top nine teams from our Twenty20 competition this year forming a Premier League."

Middlesex chief Vinny Codrington agreed that a franchise system could be "a huge success", so long as it benefited all of the counties.

The ECB plans to discuss its proposals for the future structure of the domestic game at another meeting on 26 May.

An ECB delegation, led by the chief executive David Collier and chairman Giles Clarke, held exploratory discussions with Indian Premier League officials earlier this month.

Both have vowed to protect the interests of the existing first-class counties, but TV executives, potential sponsors and Texas-based billionaire Sir Allen Stanford are believed to have advised that an 18-team league would not be an attractive commercial proposition.

Last week the ECB secured 75 million pounds from Stanford for two T20 events -- a series of five matches to be played in Antigua annually between England and Stanford's all-stars and a four-team Twenty20 tournament at Lord's for the next five years.

Harbhajan's chequered

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disciplinary record since making his India debut.

In 1998, the year of his debut, he was fined and given a suspended one-game ban for clashing with Ricky Ponting after dismissing the Australian in a one-day international in Sharjah.

He has been fined four times since then.

Harbhajan, who has twice been reported for "throwing", was also expelled from the National Cricket Academy (NCA) early in his career for poor attitude.

He made a superb return in 2001 when he took 32 wickets to spark India's 2-1 home Test series win over Australia.

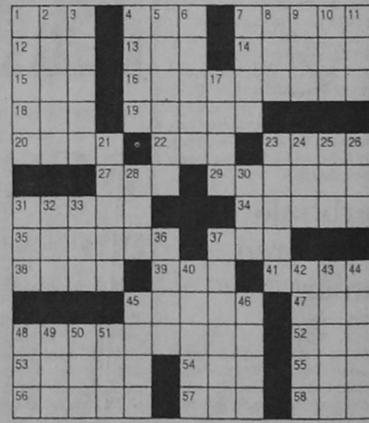
Sreesanth, 25, has also been disciplined for on-pitch theatrics and poor behaviour.

The worst example came at the Nottingham Test last year when he barged into England captain Michael Vaughan at the non-striker's end.

Harbhajan has had a wayward

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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CRYPTOQUIP

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