

Clarke flies off to Caribbean

AFP, Sydney

Australian batsman Michael Clarke departed for the West Indies on Friday after delaying his trip to the Caribbean for family reasons.

Clarke said he was eager to resume his cricketing duties after missing the first Test. He had stayed in Australia to be with his fiancée following the death of her father.

"I'm feeling good and I'm feeling fresh, so I'm as keen as mustard," he told reporters. "I've had a lot of time to make sure I'm fit and healthy."

Clarke said he did not assume he would play in the second Test starting in Antigua on May 30, noting the good recent form of recalled batsmen Simon Katich and Brad Hodge.

"If you miss a game like me, unfortunately at the moment there's somebody else who will take your place and do very well," Clarke said. "The selectors have a very hard job, it will be interesting to see."

Punjab serve

FROM PAGE 17 cover and mid-off. Gibbs, who was uncomfortable against Sreesanth's swinging deliveries, attacked successive balls drifting onto his pads, flicking through midwicket and nudging past fine leg. He rounded off the third over, which went for 12 runs, with a perfectly timed drive through extra cover.

The two were cautious for a brief period when the spinners came on, scoring only six runs off 12 balls, but a restless Gibbs then decided to turn on the aggression by stepping out and sloggish Ramesh Powar for six over midwicket and lofting Chawla for two sixes over long-on. Gilchrist, who was troubled by Chawla's googlies, attacked Yuvraj, going inside-out over mid-on for a six. Both were bowled going for big to the line hits - Gibbs trying to slog Gagandeep Singh and Gilchrist sweeping Powar.

Deccan were aided by some shoddy work by the Punjab fielders. Powar fumbled his dive and allowed a Gilchrist shot to go over the line, while Sreesanth gave away runs with mis-fields at third man and fine leg. Then there was VRV who only half-heartedly tried to go for a catch at long-off off Rohit. That dropped catch proved costly for Punjab as Rohit hit 32 off two overs soon after their reprieve.

Punjab's only motivation, going into this match, was to play for ranking in the final four and this win will ensure they are that much closer to it.

SCORES IN BRIEF

DECCAN CHARGERS: 175 for 4 in 20 overs (Gilchrist 50, Gibbs 44, Sharma 50, Rao 2, Silva 23 not out, Styris 1 not out, Sreesanth 1-29, VRV Singh 1-40, Powar 1-20, Gagandeep 1-33)

KINGS XI PUNJAB: 178 for 4 in 19.3 overs (Marsh 60, Sangakkara 50, Yuvraj 17, Pommersbach 13, Jayawardene 14 not out, Chawla 16 not out, Styris 1-36, Sharma 1-25, Ojha 2-30)

Result: Kings XI Punjab won by 6 wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Shaun Marsh. Umpires: Asad Rauf (Pakistan) and SJ Davis (Australia). Toss: Kings XI Punjab.

SAFF squad

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Sporting Independent squad: Goalkeepers: Nizam, Biplab, Shakil; defenders: Sujun, Shuvro, Babu, Faisal, Titu, Ramjan, Montu, Sony, Mamun, Gobinda; midfielders: Jony, Pappu, Monwar, Saiful, Jalal, Manik, Taju; forwards: Kanchan, Alfaz, Milon, Enamul and Rony.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

FROM PAGE 17

Noakhali Football XI played out a one-all draw with Murapara SC in the central zone at the Basabo Tarun Sangha Club ground.

Uzzal Kanti scored for Noakhali Football XI in the 10th minute while Sohail Rana netted the equaliser for Murapara SC in the 45th minute.

In south zone at the Mohammadpur Idgah ground, Dhanmondi Football Academy were held to a goalless draw by Mohammadpur JKs.

DIVII CRICKET

Prime Dholeswar Sporting Club could not celebrate their promotion to First Division as they went down to Green Leaf by four wickets in their last Super League match of the Second Division at the Dhaka University ground yesterday.

Opting to bat first, Dholeswar were all out for 173 in 44.3 overs with Jassy hittin an unbeaten 82. Zahidul claimed three wickets for 25 runs.

In reply, Green Leaf reached victory making 177 in 45 overs with Amirul contributing 61 runs and Saful not out on a half-century.

At the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Gopibagh (105-7) beat Prantik (101 all out) by three wickets while the day's other match between Kakrai Boys Club and Dhanmondi Pragati Sangha at the City Club ground was abandoned without a ball being bowled due to unplayable condition of the ground following overnight rain.

I'm ruthless: Modi

INTERNET, undated



Former England cricket captain Michael Atherton has called him "ruthless," but for Lalit Modi, the man behind cricket's revolutionary Indian Premier League and vice-president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), this is less of a criticism and more a statement of fact.

"I am ruthless, without doubt," he told CNN's Talk Asia in Mumbai.

"Otherwise we wouldn't get where we were." Many believe that Modi, 44, has taken cricket into a new era, turning a sport that can be baffling to watch and take five days to play, into a brightly-coloured instant hit of action taking just a few hours.

With cheerleaders, the best players in the world and even Bollywood stars as part owners of some of the teams, Modi has concocted a recipe fit for prime-time TV consumption, in a country renowned for its passion for the game.

Modi's came up with the idea of a new Indian cricket league came 14 years ago, but resisted the involvement of the BCCI at that time, citing too many vested interests within India's main cricketing body that would have spoiled his ideas.

While ruthless he is also astute

to the financial potential of cricket in India and the IPL.

After graduating from Duke University in the U.S. in sports management he returned to India to launch ESPN and 10 Sports.

Coming from a family that controls Modi Enterprise, an industrial conglomerate worth \$1.5 billion, Modi admits his family were concerned that he was moving away from business and spend-



LALIT MODI

ing so much time with cricket while setting up the IPL.

"They didn't think that I'll be spending so much time with cricket, and cricket has taken up so much time of my time, but the job has made it so demanding. Either I do it well, and if I do it well then I need to give the time for it," he told CNN.

It's been time well spent, both professionally and personally:

Modi has his own private jet, gets mobbed in the streets by fans and can hang out with Bollywood stars.

Yet he hasn't made a fortune from the IPL. "I have an honorary position and BCCI is a charity and a trust. It's a nonprofit-making organization and we do this for development of the game and I'm passionate about the game."

However as vice-president of the BCCI he has been instrumental in boosting its revenues, brokering television deals and sponsorship associations that could see it top the \$1 billion mark in the next five years.

It's no surprise that such an iconoclastic figure in a game rooted in tradition has his personal critics and those that are sceptical about the direction he is taking the game.

Modi was not without controversy himself, as he was accused of drug dealing and abduction while at university, claims that were never proven.

The 20-over version of the game played in the IPL has worried some that the finer points of the game may be sacrificed for the instant, mass-market appeal.

But for Modi, it's quite simple: "We've hit records in viewership, record numbers in sponsorships sales, record number in team franchise sales, the owner themselves have done so well, the stadiums are full. We got Bollywood involved, I mean it's a script that I couldn't have written better myself."

He said the Knight Riders have lost a couple of matches and the boys were down at present but it doesn't have to be an opportunity to "hatch conspiracy theories".

"I have learnt that the world loves only winners," he said.

The actor said Sourav messaged him thrice requesting a clarification on media reports of the alleged rift between them.

"My team told me that they have yet to meet a better human being than me. This is a huge compliment," he said.

Shah Rukh admitted that his team's losses were hurtful and disturbing.

"But this is a game and if there is a winner then there has to be a loser too," he said, trashing rumours that he was planning to sell the team.

"Don't hit someone when he is down. I have seen too many losses and victories in my career including films flopping, running successfully and speculation of not getting along with film fraternity members. This is just one small incident," he said.

ICC upsets Khan

INTERNET, undated



Bollywood megastar Shah Rukh Khan still cannot believe that he had been stopped from entering the dressing room of the team he owns and the actor is sulking, saying that he was "singled out for such harsh treatment".

The Delhi-born actor, who owns the Kolkata Knight Riders, made it clear on Thursday that he was very upset after being told by an official of the ICC Anti-Corruption and Security Unit (ACSU) to stay away from the players.

"I have paid my players to win. Will I pay them now to lose? This is illogical," an angry Shah Rukh said on the sets of his TV show in Mumbai.

The megastar was clearly miffed at being treated as if he were a "bookie".

"The Indian Premier League

(IPL) has its set of rules and regulations and I am a law-abiding person.

But why pick on me? Other team owners are seen near their players. Is it because I am a celebrity and vulnerable?" he asked angrily.

The IPL authorities subsequently decided that an owner could stay in the team dugout while four visitors would be allowed to stay for 15 minutes each and they could be there one at a time.

Shah Rukh was far from happy with the 15-minute allowance.

"Why should I be given only 15 minutes time with my players? This is unfair," he said.

The Kolkata Knight Riders' owner said the IPL is a domestic tournament and should follow the rules and regulations of the BCCI.

Scoffing at reports in a section of the media that he does not get along with captain Sourav Ganguly, Shah Rukh said, "reports said that I was kicking chairs. Don't have any work other than clarifying to the whole world that nothing of this sort has happened?"



PHOTO: INTERNET

POWER MEETS SPEED: Australia batsman Andrew Symonds poses alongside Jamaican superstar Asafa Powell, the fastest man on earth, at the National Stadium in Kingston on Wednesday.

When Roy met Asafa

Cricket

INTERNET, undated

Rare is the time Andrew Symonds has sought a runner, his pain threshold similar to that of a slab of granite. But when the opportunity arose for an audience with Asafa Powell, the fastest man in history and favourite for 100 metres gold at the Beijing Olympics, the Australian all-rounder could not refuse.

Symonds, nicknamed Roy, has often sought inspiration from other sports - rugby league the most obvious example - and Wednesday was no exception. On the eve of the first Test at Sabina Park, he slipped away from Australia's team base for a training session with Powell's MVP track club at Jamaica's National Stadium.

"I always find that there's something to learn from other successful athletes, even if your sports aren't too similar," Symonds said.

"What he has achieved in his career so far is pretty amazing, and it was great to see and hear first-hand

about the things Asafa does to get where he is.

"Knowing what I know now, it will make watching the Olympics later this year even more interesting."

On a sweltering morning in Kingston, Symonds and Stuart Karppinen, Australia's strength and conditioning trainer, assumed the roles of spectator as Powell continued his comeback from a chest injury in the shadows of Long Mountain.

Both snapped photographs and compared observational notes as the Commonwealth Games gold medalist - who has broken 10 seconds for the 100m a staggering 33 times and holds the world record at 9.74 - went through his paces.

Though dreadlocks are de rigueur in this part of the world, Symonds's trackside presence did not go unnoticed.

The burly Queenslander's shoulder charge, which floored an errant streaker at the Gabba earlier this year, attracted as much discussion as his exploits with bat and ball.

Powell, for his part, was

delighted by the Australian's visit.

"Everybody knows who he is and what he's done," Powell said. "He's a great player. With travel and training it, can be hard to keep up with the cricketer, but I'll definitely try to get down to Sabina Park this week to watch him."

Symonds's meeting with Powell might have been the headline moment of the morning session, but it was another that left the most enduring impression on the Australian.

Symonds was moved by the conditions under which Powell and teammates train. While his sprinting contemporaries benefit from the latest technology and facilities at various institutes of sports and colleges, Powell trains at a small, dilapidated sprinting track, which doubles as a football field on weekends.

"We tend to whinge and complain sometimes if our drink's not cold enough, so to see such successful athletes working in pretty basic surroundings was humbling," Symonds said. "It makes you appreciate how lucky we are to have all the facilities that are available to us."

Nel returns for Proteas

REUTERS, Johannesburg

Fiery paceman Andre Nel returns to the squad as South Africa announced a battery of fast bowlers for their tour of England on Friday.

The 30-year-old, who has played 34 tests, is the only addition to the squad that toured India in March and April, from which he was controversially omitted.

Nel joins a six-man pace attack that includes the in-form Dale Steyn, the experienced Makhaya Ntini, the up-and-coming Morne Morkel, as well as Monde Zondeki.

"It is a long tour with two lots of back-to-back test matches and we all know what the rate of attrition of fast bowlers can be, which is why we selected an extra one," selection convenor Joubert Strydom said in a statement released by Cricket South Africa on Friday.

"In addition, we feel that we will need to give Dale Steyn a bit of a rest as he has been bowling regularly in the Indian Premier League."

"He is one of our key weapons and we want him to be at his best when the test series gets underway. The same applies to Makhaya Ntini, while Morne Morkel is coming back from injury," Strydom said.

The rest of the squad is the same that drew the series 1-1 in India, including two spinners in Paul Harris and Robin Peterson.

South Africa's tour of England will include four tests, five ODIs and a Twenty20 match, as well as six non-international matches. They will leave for England on June 24.

SQUAD

Graeme Smith, Ashwell Prince, Hashim Amla, Mark Boucher, AB de Villiers, JP Duminy, Paul Harris, Jacques Kallis, Neil McKenzie, Morne Morkel, Andre Nel, Makhaya Ntini, Robin Peterson, Dale Steyn, Monde Zondeki.

Huge turn awaits

AFP, Kingston

West Indies debutant spinner Amit Jaggernauth said he expected the Sabina Park wicket for the first test against Australia to be offering "huge" turn in the latter stages.

Australia made 301 for four on the opening day of the first test on Thursday with Jaggernauth claiming the wicket of Michael Hussey.

"For a first day track I thought the pitch had some degree of turn and I would expect, as the test goes along, the turn would definitely increase," said the Trinidadian. "On the third and fourth day it is really going to be spinning huge."

The extra spin could help Jaggernauth but would also be a test for West Indies batting fourth against Australian leg-spinner Stuart MacGill.

Australia captain Ricky Ponting, who struck a superb 158, agreed that there could be significant turn in the pitch later in the test and expected MacGill to exploit it.

"There wasn't a lot on offer for the spinner (Jaggernauth) but he kept tossing the ball up and giving himself the chance to take wickets," he said.

2007 brings

FROM PAGE 17

In absence of Tamim, his elder brother Nafis Iqbal received the award from ex-national cricket captain Aminul Islam.

Track queen Shamsunahar Beauty clinched the leading Female Sports person award but for the second successive year, no footballer was considered in any category.

Two runners-up awards went to Ziaur Rahman (Kabaddi) and Enamul Hossain Rajib (chess).

Prothom Alo Editor Matiar Rahman and Grameenphone CEO Anders Jensen also spoke on the occasion.

The jury board, headed by Golam Sarwar Tipu, also featured Nazrul Islam Rumi, Jalal Ahmed Chowdhury, Salma Rafique and Minhajul Abedin.

The winners of Lifetime Achievement and Sports person of the Years each received Tk one lakh and the other winners Tk 50,000 each.

Ponting

FROM PAGE 17

On Friday: AUSTRALIA: First innings (overnight 301 for four)

Jagges lbw b Edwards	9
Kaich c Sammy b Edwards	12
Ponting c Parchment b Bravo	158
Hussey c Bravo b Jaggernauth	56
Hodge c Ramdin b Edwards	67
Johnson c Powell b Sammy	22
Symonds not out	18
Haddin c Ramdin b Sammy	11
Leen not out	4
Extras: (b-2, lb-11, nb-2)	15
Total: (For 7 wks in 112 overs)	372
To bat: Clark, MacGill.	

Fall of wickets: 1-18, 2-37, 3-174, 4-293, 5-326, 6-350, 7-368.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Powell	26	4	90	0
Edwards	20	2	78	3
Sammy	24	6	56	2
Bravo	22	6	61	1
Jaggernauth	20	0	74	1

WEST INDIES: Smith, Parchment, Sarwan, Morton, Chanderepa, Bravo, Ramdin, Sammy, Taylor, Powell, Edwards, Jaggernauth. Toss: Australia.

Umpires: Aleem Dar, R. Tiffin.



PHOTO: STAR

Boys of the 10-14 age-group pay attention to former Roma and Milan footballer Maurizio Turone (R), the head coach of YKK-Roma project 'Just for Kicks' that began at the BUET ground yesterday.

FRENCH OPEN DRAW HELD

Testing start for Federer

Tennis

AFP, Paris

Birthday boy Novak Djokovic, the best player in the world in 2008, emerged the big winner after the French Open draw placed a succession of booby traps in the paths of Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal.

Federer's bid to win a first Roland Garros title faces a testing start against big American Sam Querrey.

He could then face a tricky fourth round date with Argentinian claycourter Juan Monaco before a possible quarterfinal match-up with the likes of either fast-rising compatriot Stanilas Wawrinka, the ninth seed, or French eighth seed Richard Gasquet.

Spanish claycourt specialists Juan Carlos Ferrero, the 2002 champion, fifth seed David Ferrer and Tommy Robredo are all possible semifinal opponents for Federer who is desperate to add an elusive French Open title to his collection of 12 Grand Slams.

Federer, who has lost to Nadal in the last two finals, will face a confident Querrey. The 20-year-old is riding high after capturing his maiden career title in Las Vegas this year.

Querrey also showed that he is no fool on clay when he reached the quarterfinals at the Monte Carlo Masters in April knocking out former French Open winner Carlos

Moya on the way.

But Nadal, who is bidding to become the first player since Bjorn Borg in 1981 to win four titles in a row here, was the biggest loser in the draw.

The Spaniard, who has a perfect record at Roland Garros of 21 wins in 21 matches, begins his campaign against a qualifier with a possible tricky quarter-final against David Nalbandian.

Nadal has lost both his career meetings with the muscular Argentinian.

The 21-year-old, fresh from deposing Federer as Hamburg champion last week for his eighth win in nine claycourt meetings with the Swiss, faces an array of possible problems in the early rounds.

Compatriots and claycourt specialists Nicolas Pietrangeli, seeded 19, and 22nd seed Fernando Verdasco, as well as British 10th seed Andy Murray, could stand in his way.

Australian Open and Rome Masters champion Djokovic could face Nadal in the semi-finals.

He starts against Germany's Denis Gremelmayr, the world 63, with America's James Blake a probable last-eight opponent.

In between, Djokovic, who turned 21 on Thursday, should be untroubled with just 1998 champion Moya a potential problem in the third round.

Former triple champion Gustavo Kuerten, who will be

playing his last match before retirement, faces a tricky opener against French 18th seed Paul-Henri Mathieu.

Women's top seed Maria Sharapova, bidding to win a first French Open and complete a career Grand Slam, begins her campaign against fellow Russian Evgeniya Rodina, the world number 104.

Second seed Serbian Ana Ivanovic, the runner-up to Justine Henin in 2007, faces Sweden's Sofia Andersson while 2002 champion Serena Williams starts against fellow American Ashley Harkleroad.

Henin, the champion here for the last three years, recently announced her retirement from the game, a decision which has thrown open the women's draw.

Sharapova, a semi-finalist in 2007 and the new world number one could face compatriot and 2004 runner-up Elena Dementieva in the quarter-finals with fellow Russian Svetlana Kuznetsova a potential semifinal opponent.

Third seed Jelena Jankovic begins against a qualifier with French hopes Amelie Mauresmo and Alize Cornet also in her section.

Venus Williams, runner-up to her sister in 2002, is seeded eight and could face Jankovic in the last eight.

Serena is a possible quarterfinal opponent for Ivanovic.

Back to basics

FROM PAGE 17

In the practice match last week against Jamaica, he felt some things coming back again.

"The last Test innings I had was a hundred, but I struggled through the ODI series and never felt that comfortable and this innings I felt comfortable again," he said.

"I am pleased about this innings because it was hot, and when the hardness went out of the ball it was hard to score runs, and I think all the batsmen had to work hard for their runs."

"But the second new ball has been taken, we are four down with 301 on the board. Hopefully, we can build on that with the new ball on Friday, and with guys like Andrew Symonds and Brad Haddin to come, we can really push on and post a really big first innings total."

Although this was Ponting's

seventh Test hundred against West Indies and fourth in a row in the Caribbean, he had no special reason for his success against these opponents or on the islands.

"Last time, I had a really good tour to the Caribbean, and I have gotten off to a good start this time," he said.

"It's just funny. Sometimes you go to places that you enjoy playing and you have a lot of success. The Australian teams over the years have really enjoyed playing their cricket in the Caribbean - and we've got lots of good memories here - but this is all behind us."

Ponting however, is still mindful of his side's ultimate objective of winning the Test and he believes they have to assert their position on Friday's second day.

"150