



Women footballers take part in a training session during tryouts at Rangamati yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Time to move

FROM PAGE 17 go a long way. His season could well be given the perfect icing with a fat IPL contract, something that Shakib also aspires after another great month.

They say that when you are in form grab as much as you can because you might never have that again. Shakib has loaded up on the runs and wickets in all ways possible. So much has luck gone his that when he stuck his hand up for the crucial Kumar Sangakkara catch, he caught it. Some hoped he would remove Nuwan Kulasekara early and he got him early too.

But it seems that Shakib's good luck is what his captain needs. Remember Ashrafal started this series with a Test hundred against his bunny side. He fell into the inconsistency trap once again and was surely to blame for the early collapse against Zimbabwe. It was nightmarish cricket from the ace batsman. But this is Ashrafal and he doesn't let go of big occasions. He supported Shakib in the win against Sri Lanka, hitting just one boundary and just because he is Ashrafal, it had to be a blazing drive over extra-cover's head.

Bangladesh entered the final and the rest will forever be remembered as the match of all matches. Bangladesh, bowled out for 150-odd, had Sri Lanka crawling at five for six, a world record.

Ashrafal kept the field up and gave his bowlers every chance to take wickets and when they had eight, his fault was to continue with a pace bowler who bowls a fast yorker and a fiery bouncer at tail-enders. That is how Rubel took his wickets in just the last match. He forgot how he did it and so did the country as sixes sailed over his head. Ashrafal gave him another go, fatefully, and the match was lost.

The recriminations can be harsh and they are. Maybe Ashrafal could have given Mahmudullah Riyad the ball. But without having bowled a ball in the previous three hours, what was his state of mind? How about Ashrafal himself? If he did win Bangladesh the match with two quick wickets, his detractors would have blamed him for taking the glory. If he didn't and still bowled, he was easily to blame. But he took the common decision, give the bowler the ball, ask for a wicket. The bowler did not deliver. Period.

Probably the Sri Lankans could have taken Ashrafal along for the ride and asked him not to read the newspapers but gone are the days when opponents sit and discuss cricket. These days glory is played over and over in television highlight shows. Players move on, and so should the rest of us.

Otherwiser there is not a

India may stick

FROM PAGE 17 Ranji match for Kerala, in which he took seven wickets against Jharkhand, and has, for all practical purposes, made himself available for national selection. A more likely alternative, though, is that the selectors will give Sreesanth a chance in the Duleep Trophy, where he will get between one and three games to prove himself.

One player who has made a strong case for himself by weight of his Ranji Trophy performances is Saurashtra's Ravindra Jadeja who was, by a fair margin, the all-rounder of the season. He was the leading wicket-taker, along with Mumbai's Dhawal Kulkarni, with 42 wickets and he scored 739 runs at 67.18 to finish sixth on the top run-scorers' list. Being a left-arm spinner, Jadeja could take the spot of Pragnan Ojha, who last played in Sri Lanka and was among the reserves against England. Therefore Jadeja's inclusion in the squad to Sri Lanka will not be a surprise for he brings hefty hitting and a strong arm

from the outfield to the table.

The other dispensable member from the last ODI squad could be Irfan Pathan but he got only one game after he was dropped following the Sri Lanka series. If Irfan is overlooked, either Kulkarni or L Balaji could make the cut. Balaji took 36 wickets at 17.50 apiece in his comeback season but there are many who believe he isn't at his best yet.

Virat Kohli, who was part of the squad against England but didn't play any of the games, is expected to keep his place. He held his own in his only five ODIs, which were incidentally in Sri Lanka last year.

The solitary Twenty20 does not require a separate squad.

LIKELY SQUAD Mahendra Singh Dhoni (captain), Sachin Tendulkar, Virender Sehwag, Gautam Gambhir, Yuvraj Singh, Suresh Raina, Rohit Sharma, Yusuf Khan, Ishant Sharma, Munaf Patel, Harbhajan Singh, Ravindra Jadeja/Pragnan Ojha, Irfan Pathan/L Balaji/Dhawal Kulkarni.

Barisal nearly there

FROM PAGE 17 Ashrafal Hossain added 41 off 59 balls.

RAJSHAHI-SYLHET Spinner Nabil Samad bagged five wickets for 26 runs but his effort was not good enough as Rajshahi won the low-scoring match against Sylhet by three wickets at BKSP.

In reply to 123, Rajshahi lost wickets at regular interval but number four Hamidul Islam kept his cool in one end during his unbeaten 72-ball 46 that featured six boundaries as Rajshahi reached the target in 36.2 overs.

Hamidul got good support from his captain Anisur Rahman as 64 runs came in the fifth wicket stand. Anisur made 27 off 58 balls with the help of three boundaries.

Earlier Shafaq Al Jabir started the carnage in the Sylhet innings by picking up three wickets while his new ball partner Delwar Hossain also picked up three wickets as Sylhet were bundled out for 123 in 35.3 overs.

Number nine Monir Hossain was the top scorer with 41-ball 32 that contained four boundaries.

Sohrawordi Shuvo and

Sanjamul Islam claimed two wickets each.

KHULNA-DHAKA A 98-run unbeaten sixth wicket partnership between Mohammad Salim and Ziaur Rahman helped Khulna secure a five-wicket victory against Dhaka at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

It was however Ziaur Rahman who showed an all-round performance by making a run-a-ball 55 after claiming three wickets for 27 runs to ensure the comfortable win as Khulna made 203 for 5 in 44.5 overs in reply to 201-9 in 47 overs.

Opener Nazmus Sadat smashed 62 off 60 balls that contained seven boundaries.

Earlier Marshall Ayub hit 56 off 97 balls with the help of two boundaries and Arafat Sunny contributed unbeaten 30 off 28 balls as Dhaka reached to a respectable total after deciding to bat first.

Zia was most successful bowler with 3 for 27 runs.

BRIEF SCORES

CHITTAGONG: 260-8 in 50 overs (Ashrafal 41, Arman 53, Rezaul 37, Sajjadul 31 not out, extras 17; Tariqul 2-66, Bashar

2-31) BARISAL: 260-8 in 49.4 overs (Rony 25, Nasir 64, Raisul 64, Bashar 39 not out, extras 25; Tareq 3-54, Newaz 2-42, Rezaul 3-47). RESULT: Barisal won by three runs.

SYLHET: 123 all out in 35.3 overs (Kamrul 18, Monir 32, extras 3; Shafaq 3-24, Delwar 3-31, Shuvo 2-26, Sanjamul 2-35). RAJSHAHI: 124-7 in 36.2 overs (Mizanur 22, Hamidul 46 not out, Anisur 27, extras 14; Nabil 5-26). RESULT: Rajshahi won by three wickets.

DHAKA: 201-9 in 47 overs (Marshall 56, Arafat Sunny 30 not out, extras 21; Zia 3-27, Rabiul 2-51).

KHULNA: 203-5 in 44.5 overs (Sadat 62, Salim 49 not out, Zia 55 not out, extras 12; Shahadat 2-45, Elias 2-25). RESULT: Khulna won by five wickets.

BCCI starts examining Kapil

PTI, New Delhi

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Friday started cross-examining former India cricket team captain Kapil Dev on the allegations levelled by him against the board for allegedly taking punitive action against him and his Indian Cricket League (ICL) colleagues.

The former cricketer in his affidavit had alleged that the board is neglecting the former cricketers who served the nation and is taking punitive action by stopping their pension and other post-retirement benefits to be released by the BCCI.

At the start of the proceeding before Registrar of Delhi High Court, Pawan Kumar Jain, advocate Amit Sibak appearing for the BCCI objected to media's presence in the court and pleaded that journalists be directed to leave.

But Maninder Singh, counsel for Subhash Chandra-promoted ICL, objected to his plea and said that media cannot be directed to move out as it is an open court proceeding.

The Registrar then dismissed the plea of BCCI and directed Sibak to start cross-examination in the presence of media.

In the last proceeding on December 12, the former all-rounder had alleged that the board is neglecting the former cricketers.

The board has stopped pension to 15 former players including Kapil Dev, Kiron More, Sandeep Patil, Ajit Wadekar, E Prasanna after they joined its rival ICL.

With a view to protect the players' interest in the fight between two 'giants' involving BCCI and Subhash Chandra-promoted ICL, the court had in August last year restrained the public sector corporations to take any punitive action against its employee cricketer, registered with BCCI but who joined ICL.

Siam takes

FROM PAGE 17 the sixth round at the federation hall-room yesterday.

In this round, Siam beat reigning sub-junior champion Abdullah Al Saif. Shahidul Alam Abir followed the leader with 5.5 points.

In the other matches, Abir beat Pape, Shariet beat Lucky, Fahad beat Zoar, Ahely beat Shahriar, Aninda beat Rahul, Protiva beat Farjana and Sharmin beat Tity.

Niaz stays on course

SPORTS REPORTER

Grand Master Niaz Murshed won his eighth round board against Ramakrishna of India in the seventh Parsvnath International Open Chess Tournament in New Delhi yesterday.

Niaz improved his tally to six points while FM Mohammad Javed, who beat Palaniappan of India in the same round, bagged five points and Debaraj Chatterjee of Destiny and Mohammad Ali earned 4.5 points each.

Debaraj lost to Amanov Zhanibek of Kazakhstan and Ali lost to IM Venkatesh of India. Grand Masters, Surya Shekhar Ganguly of India, Pert Kostenko of Kazakhstan and Ulibin Mikhail of Russia, are sharing the lead with seven points each.

Vaughan bats for Pietersen

BBC ONLINE, undated

Michael Vaughan has said former skipper Kevin Pietersen deserves another chance as England captain.

Pietersen quit earlier this month in the wake of his rift with coach Peter Moores, who was sacked.

But Vaughan said he did not see any reason why Pietersen could not return to the captain's role in the future.

"He (Pietersen) was definitely the man for the job, I still think he could do a really good job," said Vaughan, Pietersen's predecessor as skipper.

"As England captain he was very forward thinking, very committed, obviously ruffled a few feathers."

"But I don't mind that --- Nasser Hussain did that as captain and did a fantastic job. Graeme Smith has done that for South Africa."

"Everyone has got to be themselves, and Kevin Pietersen tried to do it his way and he said last week in his column that he feels his captaincy days aren't finished yet."

Vaughan also said it was the right decision not to select him for England's tour of the West Indies and that he had not expected to be picked.

He also refused to write off his international career and believes he will have a role to play in the eagerly-anticipated 2009 Ashes.

The 34-year-old led England to their famous win over the Australians in 2005.

But while his teammates head for the Caribbean, he will be resuming county duty at Yorkshire.

"I am 34 and I feel as though I've got a few more years left in me," Vaughan told the BBC. "You have to have that excitement and buzz, and really want to go out there and perform, and I certainly have those feelings."

Clarke to miss

FROM PAGE 17

pain in his thumb had decreased enough for him to bat at training the following day.

"However, during last night's match, he experienced pain while batting."

"It was the first time that he had batted without an injection since suffering the injury during the [first] Test match at the WACA."

"While Michael could continue to play with pain-relieving injections, this will ultimately slow his recovery."

"As a result, it was decided that he will now rest for two weeks, after which point he will be reviewed by Cricket Australia medical staff with the plan for him to be available for the series against New Zealand."

"With an important Test series against South Africa starting in four weeks, this is the best course of action."

Chairman of selectors Andrew Hilditch added: "This is obviously very disappointing for Michael and his presence will be sorely missed."

"However, it presents an exciting opportunity for David to follow his spectacular Twenty20 debut in the 50-over format for Australia."

'Win to win money'

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Donald Peters, the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) chief executive, has urged the national team to "start winning in order to attract sponsors". The WICB failed to get sponsors for the domestic one- and four-day competitions this season, but Peters reaffirmed that the board had enough funds of its own to cover the expenses.

"I have already told the West Indies cricketers that they must start winning in order to help us in attracting sponsors," Peters told the Trinidad Guardian. "When this happens everybody wants to come on board and this would put us in a better position given the current financial crisis around the world. I am happy to announce

that this money being used to run the regional first-class series is not from a loan but from our resources that we have put away, in order to keep our cricket going," he said. "This will tell you that the board is a well-financed and well-run unit and is not being mismanaged. We understand the current financial crisis and we know that sponsorships are difficult but we are going to make that extra effort to keep things going smoothly."

The WICB had estimated an expenditure of around US\$1.5 million to organise the tournaments. KFC and Carib Beer had been the previous sponsors of the WICB Cup (the one-day tournament) and the four-day competition respectively, but this year the board failed to get "significant sponsorships". "Even at the level of the board's executive, we will be looking to cut costs and even if it means having less meetings and more

cricket, then we will do just that," he said.

Peters, though, is confident of a turnaround for the 2010 season. "I have been in talks with a number of people and I am optimistic that next season we would have a good sponsor on board," he said. "When you get sponsorship you have to be careful of what you are allowing. Sometimes you get a sponsor and they give you a certain amount of money and when you advertise and construct billboards and all these things, the money is spent there. When situations like these arise, I say to myself it's better I go it alone."

The WICB's relationship with Digicel, "the primary sponsor of West Indies cricket", has hardly been rosy, and the rights row ahead of the Stanford Super Series has also put into doubt financial backing from Allen Stanford, the Antigua-based billionaire.

Nalbandian wins Sydney title

Tennis

AFP, Sydney

Fourth seed David Nalbandian became the first Argentine to win the Sydney International ATP title with a fighting three-set victory over Finland's unseeded Jarkko Nieminen on Saturday.

Nalbandian, 27, claimed his 10th career ATP title in 20 finals in winning, 6-3, 6-7 (9/11), 6-2 in two hours 16 minutes.

Nalbandian is heading into next week's Australian Open as the 10th seed and the four-time quarterfinalist will begin his campaign against Frenchman Marc Gicquel on Tuesday.

"Today it was a tough match," he said. "I feel I played very good sometimes and sometimes not so good."

"But it was a very positive week and I'm going to arrive to Melbourne with a lot of confidence. So that's good."

The last Argentine to reach the Sydney final was Juan Ignacio Chela in 2002 when he lost to Roger Federer.

Nalbandian, playing in his first Sydney International tournament, defeated Frenchman Michael Llodra, four-time champion Lleyton Hewitt and France's Richard Gasquet on the way to the final.

He extended his perfect record to seven from seven matches at the Sydney Olympic venue after inspiring Argentina to beat Australia in the 2005 Davis Cup quarterfinal.

Nalbandian stretched his record over Nieminen to 7-4 with the Sydney victory.

Nalbandian appeared to be heading for a

comfortable straight sets victory when he was serving for the match at 5-4, but was broken to love as Nieminen surged back into contention.

The left-handed Finn hit back, making a match of it and taking the second set in a thrilling tiebreaker, 11 points to nine.

But the Argentine broke Nieminen's serve three times in the last set to take the championship.

"When I lost the second set with all the chances I had, it got more complicated," Nalbandian said.

"But I was break point down in at 1-1 in the third set and I made a good serve and won that game."

"After that everything was on my side. I felt I got control of the third set and didn't have much trouble in the third set."

The loss continued Nieminen's poor conversion rate in finals, with just one title from nine career deciders.

"I started to play much better from the tiebreaker," Nieminen said. "I thought I could get the momentum in the third set as well. I had break point in the third game of the third set and I didn't take it."

"But it's very good. I needed these wins and I got a lot of confidence from this week."

"I really feel good and I don't feel physically tired. But I have to play Monday at the Open, which is very soon."

Nieminen, who beat world number three Novak Djokovic in the Sydney semifinals, was a quarterfinalist at last year's Australian Open and will meet 28th French seed Paul-Henri Mathieu in the first round on Monday.

Nieminen's coach, Swede Joachim Nystrom, won the Sydney tournament when it was played at White City in 1983.



David Nalbandian of Argentina kisses the winner's trophy after defeating Jarkko Nieminen of Finland in the Sydney International final on Saturday.

PHOTO: AFP

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 36 Serf 3 Fresh 22 Jacob's 1 Split apart 37 Ed 4 Tnps brother 5 Track Wood the light 23 Bus circuit Oscar fantastic fare, 8 Taj Mahal winner 5 Adore some- city Martin 6 Lemory times 12 Phone 40 Crib quaff 25 Louvered number 41 Notion 7 Ceased to exist 26 October prefix 42 Stop pro- 8 On the 28 birth- 14 Reach 47 Bellow ship stone 212 de- 48 Clinched 9 Talent 27 37- grees F- 49 Venom- show Down 15 Be syc- ous snakes 10 Wedding replacer 16 A single 50 Biblical show'er? 29 Tex. toward 11 Micro- neighbor 17 Prompt ending brewery 31 Compre- 18 Sem- 51 Building output 33 Lebanese hances block 13 - d'tat trees 20 Little name 19 Death in 34 Finocchio bird's call Venice 36 Lobby 23 Despot DOWN 20 Actor Italian 37 Old 24 Pianist 1 U.K. McBride money 25 Unknown Dyrn 2 Historic 21 34-Down, 38 Com- man period for one motions 28 A Gersh- Solution time: 24 mins. 39 Tide win 40 Splish 29 The WEARABLES 41 Splash activity Old - 43 Potent stick Bucket 44 Lincoln 44 Mr. 45 Play- 30 Boxer 45 BIRD 46 Self 32 Fastened a belt 46 BIRD 46 Self 34 Gambling game 46 BIRD 46 Self 35 NC 46 BIRD 46 Self school



CRYPTOQUIP HMEKIDM B KL K DQVJGJKC CGQ GJKJMXD VQ HM HBS KXA DVZQXS. AQ JMQJYM EQXDBAMZ LM KGMVWF YMWVF? Saturday's Cryptoquip: WHAT DO SOME FOLKS CALL A COMPLETE LITTER OF NEWBORN CATS? THE KITTEN CABOODLE. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: J equals P