

REVISED IPL SCHEDULE

Govt yet to respond

CRICINFO, undated

The Indian Premier League's (IPL) schedule remains in flux, its chairman Lalit Modi has Wednesday said, with the situation "changing by the minute".

The central government is yet to respond to the revised schedule, sent on Tuesday.

That schedule lists no matches for Jaipur and Visakhapatnam (Vizag); Delhi, as already reported, has also been dropped from the roster. "Vizag is out," Modi said. "Jaipur we had scheduled games for, but the home ministry has asked them to be removed because they have issues about providing the para-military forces. It is now between the home ministry and the Rajasthan government. It's the same case with Delhi."

India's Home Minister P Chidambaram briefed the cabinet on the IPL issue in the morning, saying he was looking forward to the states' response in writing to take a decision.

The list includes two matches in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh, to be played by Kings XI Punjab. The Himachal state police had written to the state cricket association guaranteeing security arrangements for the two games, scheduled on May 1 and 3.

It also includes seven matches in Ahmedabad (three for Delhi Daredevils and four for Chennai Super Kings) and four in Nagpur -- three for Rajasthan Royals and one for the Daredevils.

Under the tentative schedule the home-and-away format has largely been dispensed with as more venues have been drafted in to overcome the security issues. The four teams to have all seven "home" games are Mumbai Indians, Deccan Chargers, Kolkata Knight Riders and Bangalore Royal Challengers.

Gazi take no

FROM PAGE 17
skipper and we will not be finding any player either," Gazi Tanik manager AKM Kamruzzaman told The Daily Star yesterday.

Gazi however has made one change to their team ahead of the Super League. Orissa batsman Niranjan Behera will be replaced by another Orissa player Pravanjan Mullick to strengthen the team's middle-order. Pravanjan is also the captain of Orissa in the Indian first-class competition, Ranji Trophy.

Target first

FROM PAGE 17
conceded just one goal in the tournament against eight.

The Sky Blues, who began the richest tournament in the country with a 3-0 win over Rahmatganj and followed it up with a 2-1 defeat of Chittagong Mohammedan before dumping Sheikh Russell out of the Cup stage 3-0, want to continue with their consistency," said manager Satyajit Das Rupu.

"Maintaining the consistency is important. We have to use the opportunities that come because Brothers had a great game against Mohammedan," the former national midfielder said.

Abahani's impressive young midfielder Mamun has recovered from illness, which means Amalesh will have all his players available for a 4-4-2 formation that he loves.

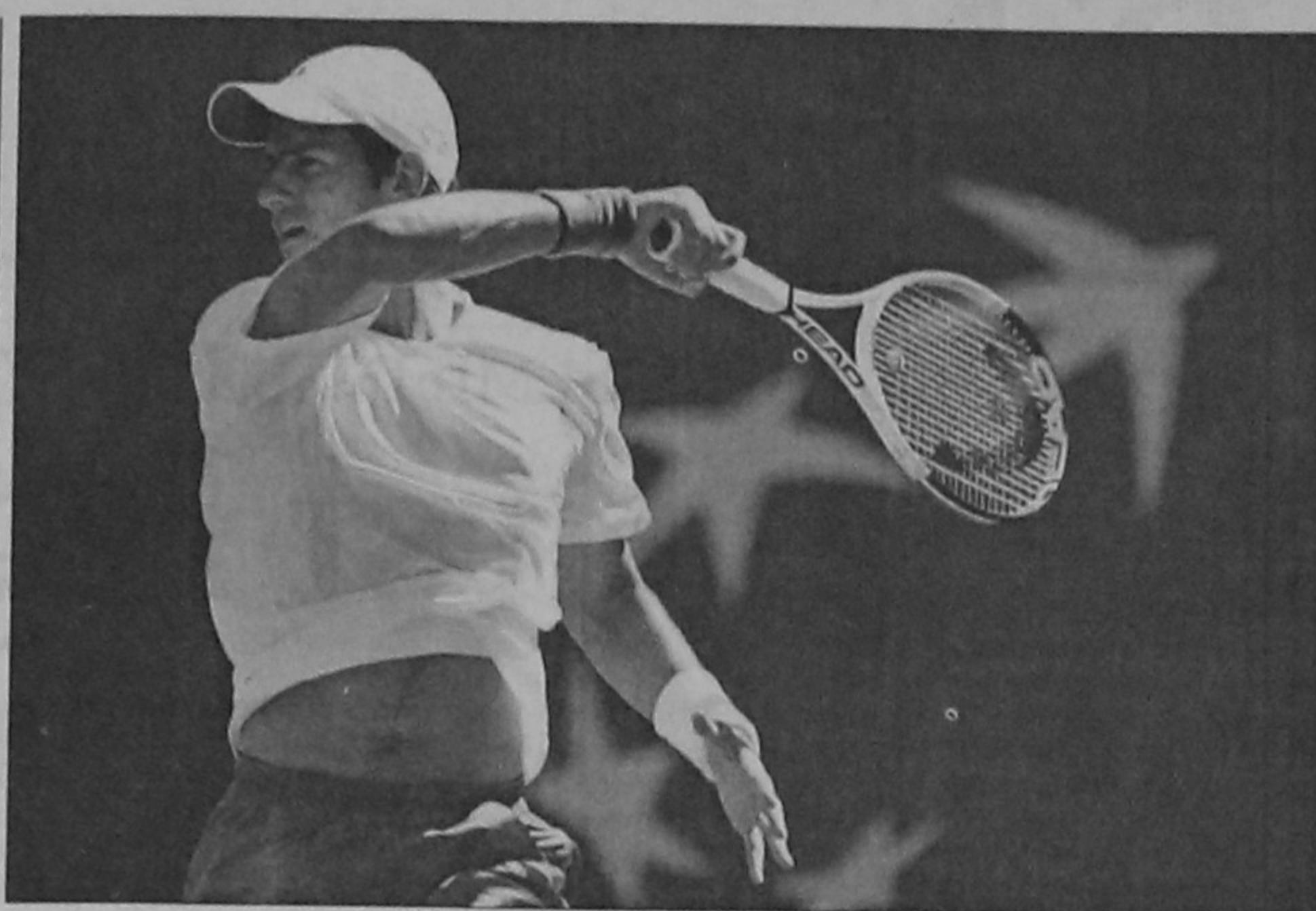
"We know if we lose one match there would be a chance to recover but we don't want to wait. It's a tournament and the mental state is important. We don't want to wait the days between the two legs in tension," Amalesh told.

Abahani were still waiting for the ITC (international transfer certificate) of their fourth foreign recruit and Rupu said that Ghana midfielder Tetteh will get into the players' list if the documents arrive in time.

"There isn't going to be much changes in the side from our previous game as all the players looked in good form. We have a tough opposition, so we not only have to be at our best but also need some luck," added Rupu.

PROBABLE TEAMS
Abahani: Bibal, Nazrul, Sujon, Samad, Waly, Abul, Joy, Emeka, Mamun, Ibrahim and Emily.

Brothers: Zia, Ariful, Shuvra, Mishu, Liton, Zahid, Matiu, Munna, Rikto, Shakil, Henry and Tapu.



Serbia star Novak Djokovic makes a forehand return to Tommy Haas of Germany during the BNP Paribas Open at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden on Tuesday.

Nadal, Djokovic thru'

Tennis

AFP, Indian Wells

World number one Rafael Nadal and defending champion Novak Djokovic stayed on course for a semifinal showdown with third-round triumphs in the Indian Wells Masters series Tuesday.

Top-seeded Nadal triumphed 6-3, 6-3 in a tricky encounter with Russian Dmitry Tursunov, while third-seeded Serbian Djokovic beat German veteran Tommy Haas 6-2, 7-6 (7/1).

"It wasn't one of my best matches, true. It was tough to play against him," said Australian Open champion Nadal, who had to save a break point in the final game but won the next three points to secure the win.

"He didn't give me a lot of rhythm. He played good shots, but at the same time made mistakes. I had more mistakes than usual."

Nadal had little time to savour the victory, which earned him a fourth-round match on Wednesday night against Argentina's David Nalbandian, who hasn't dropped a set against Nadal in two career meetings, both in 2007 before the Spaniard's rise to number one.

"The first thing is to play well," Nadal said of what he'll have to do against Nalbandian, who beat Serbian Viktor Troicki 6-4, 6-2.

"Second, I have to play really aggressive, because if he has control of the point it is

nearly impossible."

Djokovic, who beat Nadal in last year's semifinals en route to the title, started strong but would have preferred to finish off Haas more quickly.

Overall, however, the 21-year-old was satisfied that he was moving in the right direction.

"Better than the first match," was his assessment. "I played really well in the opening set, and then could have done the job a bit earlier. I had some break chances and didn't make a couple returns, and gave him a chance to come back into the match."

Djokovic next plays Switzerland's Stanislas Wawrinka, who saved two match points in the third-set tiebreaker to claim a 2-6, 7-5, 7-6 (10/8) victory over American Sam Querrey.

Sixth-seeded Argentinian Juan Martin del Potro advanced, beating Austrian Jurgen Melzer 6-2, 2-6, 7-6 (7/2).

Seventh-seeded American Andy Roddick edged Germany's Nicolas Kiefer 6-4, 7-6 (7/4).

Roddick will face 12th-seeded Spaniard David Ferrer, who rallied for a 3-6, 6-4, 6-4 victory over unseeded Frenchman Jeremy Chardy while del Potro will face American wildcard John Isner, a 6-4, 6-4 winner over former world number one Marat Safin of Russia.

Meanwhile Safin's younger sister, top-seeded Dinara Safina, led the way into the women's quarterfinals with a 7-5, 6-4 victory over US veteran

Jill Craybas.

Safina, who can seize the world number one ranking from the absent Serena Williams if she reaches the final, lined up a meeting with eighth-seeded Victoria Azarenka of Belarus, who downed Israeli Shahar Peer 7-5, 6-4.

Safina won all three of her meetings against Azarenka last year.

Defending champion Ana Ivanovic booked a quarterfinal berth, the fifth-seeded Serbian downing Italian Flavia Pennetta 6-4, 4-6, 6-4. She'll face Australian Sybil Bammer, a 6-3, 6-2 winner over Slovakia's Daniela Hantuchova.

Rising Russian Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, 17, continued the run of success that saw her out second-seeded Jelena Jankovic in the second round, advancing to the quarterfinals when opponent Nuria Llagostera Vives retired in the second round with a left hip strain.

Pavlyuchenkova, owner of three junior Grand Slam titles who has leapt to 42nd in the world, was leading 6-3, 3-0 when the Spaniard called it a day.

Pavlyuchenkova will face seventh-seeded Pole Agnieszka Radwanska, who beat Agnes Szavay 6-0, 5-7, 6-3.

Fourth-seeded Russian Vera Zvonareva also advanced with a 6-4, 6-4 victory over China's Li Na. Zvonareva next faces ninth-seeded Dane Caroline Wozniacki, a 7-5, 6-3 winner over wildcard Urszula Radwanska - younger sister of Agnieszka.

Ryder, Vettori rescue NZ

FROM PAGE 17

Dravid off Harbhajan.

Vettori's dismissal brought to an end the record seventh-wicket partnership in New Zealand-India Tests and the Indian bowlers were quickly back on top.

Kyle Mills was yanked by Patel first ball, while Iain O'Brien avoided the hat-trick and reached eight before he was stumped by Dhoni off Harbhajan.

His departure, with New Zealand 275-9 and Ryder on 98, brought out Chris Martin, who is recognised as one of the worst Test batsmen in the world.

The look of consternation on Ryder's face was evident as Martin prodded at the five remaining balls in Harbhajan's over.

Ryder then made sure of his century, hitting Ishant Sharma to the boundary and was out caught by VVS Laxman off the next ball.

It was an innings delivered with class and determination, something that was missing from the relatively inexperienced top order, who appeared to lack the resolve to bid their time in the middle.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard at close of the first day of the first Test between New Zealand and India at Seddon Park in Hamilton on Wednesday:

NEW ZEALAND: Firstinnings
Guptill c Dravid b Zaheer 14
McIntosh c Sehwa b Sharma 12
Flynn c Dhoni b Zaheer 0
Taylor b Sharma 18
Ryder c Laxman b Sharma 102

Zaheer Khan did the early damage, removing Martin Gupthill (14) and Daniel Flynn (0) in the space of three balls. Sharma added the scalps of Tim McIntosh (12), Ross Taylor (18) and James Franklin (0).

Munaf Patel claimed the sixth wicket when he sent Brendon McCullum back to the pavilion for three shortly before lunch.

In contrast, Indian attacked from the start of their innings, with Sehwa continuing the form which saw him star in the one-day series, in which India beat New Zealand 3-1.

Sehwa hit five boundaries in his unbeaten 22, while New Zealand new ball bowler Mills conceded 18 runs off his two overs.

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Franklin c Dhoni b Sharma 0
McCullum c Laxman b Patel 3
Vettori c Dhoni b Patel 118
Mills b Patel 0
O'Brien st Dhoni b Harbhajan 8
ECB felt they needed some stability in the captaincy of all the sides, although Strauss's long-term future at one-day level is still uncertain.

If he fails to recover in time for the opening ODI it will be interesting to see who steps into his captaincy shoes. Pietersen, Andrew Flintoff and Paul Collingwood have all captained England in ODIs and Collingwood would be the likeliest option should a stand-in be required.

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LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Power Development Board beat Water Development Board 3-2 in an exciting match of the National Bank Dhaka Metropolitan Premier Volleyball League at the Dhaka Volleyball Stadium yesterday.

In First Division matches, Nabajagaran Singh outplayed Uttara SC 3-2 and Madartek MS defeated Dhaka Sporting Club 3-1.

In today's matches Titas Club meet Wari Club in the Premier Division and Bhai Bhai Sangha play Azad SC in the First Division.

SWADHEENATA CUP HANDBALL

Abdul Kader Team beat Abdus Sobhan Team 32-20 in the Swadheenata Cup handball tournament at the Dhaka handball court.

In another match, Tiger Jalil Team defeated Nazrul Islam Team 27-19.

DIVII HOCKEY

Combined Sporting Club made a flying start as they crushed East End Green Club 10-0 in the Green Delta Metropolitan 2nd Division Hockey League at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium.

The day's other match between Raktim Sangha and Shantinagar Club ended in a 1-1 draw at the same venue in the afternoon.

A total of eleven teams, split into two groups, are taking part in the league.

Strauss likely to be fit for first ODI

CRICINFO, undated

England are hopeful that Andrew Strauss will recover from a slight hamstring strain he picked up during the Twenty20 international against West Indies in time to lead the side in the opening ODI in Guyana on Friday.

Strauss underwent a scan on Tuesday which showed no major damage, but couldn't take a full part in the team's fitness session. However, he still has two more days to ensure he is able to take his place in the team for what would be his first ODI since the 2007 World Cup. Where he will bat is still unclear after he went in at No. 6 during the Twenty20 defeat on Sunday.

Strauss has been rapidly shoe-horned back into the one-day plans following his quick appointment as captain in January. Given all the upheaval after Kevin Pietersen's resignation the ECB felt they needed some stability in the captaincy of all the sides, although Strauss's long-term future at one-day level is still uncertain.

If he fails to recover in time for the opening ODI it will be interesting to see who steps into his captaincy shoes. Pietersen, Andrew Flintoff and Paul Collingwood have all captained England in ODIs and Collingwood would be the likeliest option should a stand-in be required.

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The different two

Cricket

CRICINFO, Hamilton

Daniel Vettori can be an irritating tailender, robbing the momentum from the opposition, playing little dab shots, with soft hands, and taking single after single. Jesse Ryder can be a pretty flashy batsman in one-day cricket. He usually opens with Brendon McCullum in limited-overs cricket, and looks to blast the bowling from the first over on. On the first day of the Hamilton Test, both showed that they are capable of much more.

Vettori gets to play very little for Northern Districts, his state side, due to his international commitments, but last year when he did, he opened for them in the Twenty20s. Given how he played on Wednesday, he could just as well have opened in the Tests. Ryder, meanwhile, showed he is capable of a perfect Test-match innings, batting in a composed manner with wickets falling around him. His captain was suitably impressed: "They [the people who think he is one-dimensional] haven't quite seen the subtleties of his game."

When the two came together on Wednesday, they had to keep alive a Test match, and perhaps a series. At 60 for 6, there was a fairly good chance of New Zealand being bowled out for less than 100 on a pitch that would ease out after the first session. At 60 for 6, it would have been easy to hit around in desperation. "When you are 60 for six," Vettori said later, "you think, 'Let me have a swing, if it comes off it comes off, if it doesn't we are in no worse situation.' So it was important to stick to how we both know to play. We are both aggressive players, but if we had gone too hard at it, we would have got ourselves in trouble." They didn't get themselves in trouble; far from that. They got the team out of some.

Ryder is a compact player, with such strong wrists and forearms that he doesn't need to go searching for room to free his arms to generate power in his shots. He did go searching in the initial part of his innings, getting one streaky boundary through gully, but quickly regained his solidity after that. He made bowlers bow to him, and when he cover-drove he presented very little gap between bat and pad.

"They [great batsmen] respect good bowlers and they respect guys running in and doing a job," Vettori said. "When they sense an oppor-

tunity to be a bit more aggressive then they do that. We saw that throughout Jesse's innings today. I can't think of a chance that went down and I can't think of too many that went past the bat." Ryder was 12 when New Zealand lost their sixth wicket, but for the next 65 runs of his innings it hardly ever seemed he was batting with a No. 8.

That No. 8 is a highly underrated batsman himself. In an ideal world, only an extremely strong batting line-up would be able to keep Vettori down at No. 8. The New Zealand batting isn't the strongest going around, and it forces the captain to take extra responsibility with the bat, regardless of the position at which he comes in. Last year when New Zealand were facing humiliation, chasing 317 after having been bowled out for 171 against Bangladesh, Vettori promoted himself and made a match-winning 76.

Wednesday, in scoring his third century, and the first as captain, he showed qualities that a top-order batsman would have been proud of. Soft hands were the first of them. Even when the fast bowlers induced edges, they fell short of the slips, much to the frustration of the bowler and fielders. That is where Vettori was different from the McIntoshes and the Guptills. Slowly he came to terms with the pitch, and started working his wrists around.

Vettori has the ability to shape up for a drive, and then use his wrists to direct the ball square on the off side, straight down the pitch, or into the on side. Three boundaries in three overs in the middle of the innings highlighted that ability. First, Munaf was driven wide of mid-on; in the next over he drove straight and again beat the same fielder. Then, he reached out for a drive against Harbhajan Singh, found the delivery too wide, and rolled the wrists on it, keeping the ball along the ground and beating the point fielder.

By the time Vettori had got out, he had scored a century that only vindicates his batting potential. But there was unfinished business for Ryder. A superb season so far needed a defining milestone, one that would confirm his coming of age. Ryder's century didn't come without drama. From 77 to 98 he moved in Iain O'Brien's company, and scored the next four in the unreliable company of Chris Martin.

He reached the century with a short-arm pull, with a spread-out field, showing how strong those wrists and forearms are. Today, along with Vettori, they carried New Zealand and kept them in the match.

Bob won't be forgotten

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan captain Younis Khan spoke on Wednesday of how he would never forget Bob Woolmer, as the cricket world marked the second anniversary of the former national team coach's death.

Woolmer, who had been a Test batsman for England, took Pakistan to the 2007 World Cup in the West Indies but died prematurely in shocking circumstances during the tournament.

"I can never forget Bob, with his sincere and untiring efforts he could have lifted Pakistan cricket to top level," said Younis.

Woolmer, 58, was found dead in his hotel room in Jamaica on March 18, 2007, one day after Pakistan was sensationally knocked out of the World Cup following a shock defeat to outsiders Ireland.

Pakistani players came under intense investigation when Woolmer's death was initially treated as murder.

Some commentators insist Woolmer was killed to stop him blowing the whistle on illegal betting, the curse of the game in Asia. But after a detailed inquiry Jamaican police declared Woolmer died of natural causes.

The anniversary comes as Pakistani cricket remains in disarray following the March 3 ambush of the Sri Lankan team bus by armed militants in Lahore, when eight people died.

Younis said Woolmer had been dedicated to improving the Pakistan team.

"He [Woolmer] would introduce new things to the players and every time he used to come from abroad he had a new thing with him so that our players could adapt to innovations."

"I am sure that had he been with us we would have improved a great deal. Bob was a very good coach but his tragic death left us shattered and stranded," said Younis, who took over as captain last month.

So devastated was Younis after Woolmer's death and Pakistan's humiliating defeat that he refused to take the captaincy when

Inzamamul Haq stepped down and retired from one-day cricket after team's failed Cup campaign.

"The tragic loss of a beloved coach combined with the shock defeat and then a frightening investigation left us stunned, so it took us some time to recover," said Younis.

Younis said Woolmer played a big role in his comeback after he was kicked out of the team in 2003.

"Bob used to encourage me a lot. I was out of the team in 2003 and he helped me get my place back and when I was back in the team, I hit a hundred against Sri Lanka in Karachi," recalled Younis.

Woolmer, also a former South African coach, joined Pakistan in 2004 in a period of turmoil following one-day and Test defeats against arch rivals India which led to the axing of Javed Miandad as coach.

For two years and 10 months, Woolmer endeavoured to build a working relationship with the team and, more importantly, with the management who had dismissed several coaches and captains on poor results.

Under him, Pakistan levelled their two-Test home series against Sri Lanka before Australia thrashed them 3-0.

The turning point came when Pakistan beat Ashes-winning England 2-0 on home soil after squaring Test series in India and the West Indies in 2005, and then beating India at home and Sri Lanka away in 2006.

Former Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Nasim Ashraf said Woolmer had worked for to improve Pakistan cricket.

"We gave full support to Bob and he delivered for us. Sadly his death left his work incomplete. We thought he would lift the team to greater heights. The World Cup results were shocking for everyone, including Bob," said Ashraf.

To honour Woolmer, the Ashraf-led PCB dedicated their indoor cricket school at the National Cricket Academy in Lahore, which was inaugurated by the Pakistan and South African teams in October 2007, to their late coach.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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