

'We can win without Roy'

AFP, Sydney

Skipper Ricky Ponting says he has enough talent for Australia's Ashes defence in England this year without controversial all-rounder Andrew Symonds.

Selectors preferred the injury-prone Shane Watson over Symonds when they unveiled their 16-man squad here on Wednesday for the June-September series.

Ponting, who the previous day said he wouldn't be surprised if Symonds was named in his touring party, defended the selectors' choice of Watson and Andrew McDonald ahead of the headline-grabbing 34-year-old for the team's all-rounder spots.

Symonds, popularly called Roy among his teammates, has had a chequered 26-Test career and has not played a Test for Australia since Boxing Day last year against South Africa in Melbourne following a season of injury, poor form and off-field personal problems.

WC opening

FROM PAGE 17 hold the opening ceremony at the Big Bowl.

The committee members unanimously decided that the 2011 World Cup opening ceremony would be held at the Bangabandhu National Stadium. We therefore recommended that the sports ministry take immediate measures so that the inaugural programme is held successfully," said Russel.

The committee proposed three stadiums - Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, Fatullah Cricket Stadium and Chittagong Divisional Stadium -- for the World Cup matches," he added.

The meeting also recommended that the sports ministry take initiative to upgrade the Kamalapur Stadium to an international standard football venue while it also discussed about a new venue exclusively for football.

The committee has asked respective ministries and departments to give the World Cup the highest priority to make it a grand success. It also asked concerned officials to give extra importance on the mega event.

BCB president Lt Gen Sina Ibn Jamali also attended the meeting.

Akhtar's T20

FROM PAGE 17 anything more about his status in Pakistan's (15-man) squad for the World Cup but we will make an announcement on it tomorrow (Thursday).

Shoaib has not trained since coming back from the series against Australia in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Questions were asked of his fitness levels during the five-ODI and one Twenty20 series; he failed to fulfil his quota of ten overs in any of the four ODIs he played and bowled only two overs in the Twenty20. He managed to pick up three wickets in the series and looked to be visibly suffering in the field and when bowling his second spells.

He was, however, still selected for the World Twenty20, Pakistan's team management expressing confidence in his ability to get fully fit for the tournament in England.

Shoaib's career, particularly of late, has been littered with fitness troubles. During the ODI series against Sri Lanka earlier in the year, then captain Shoaib Malik, openly questioned whether Shoaib was capable of lasting 50 overs in the field as a bowler and fielder.

The latest episode has also reportedly upset the board, who were less than pleased that Shoaib chose to get his treatment done by a doctor of his own choice and not, as policy states, a PCB-appointed one.

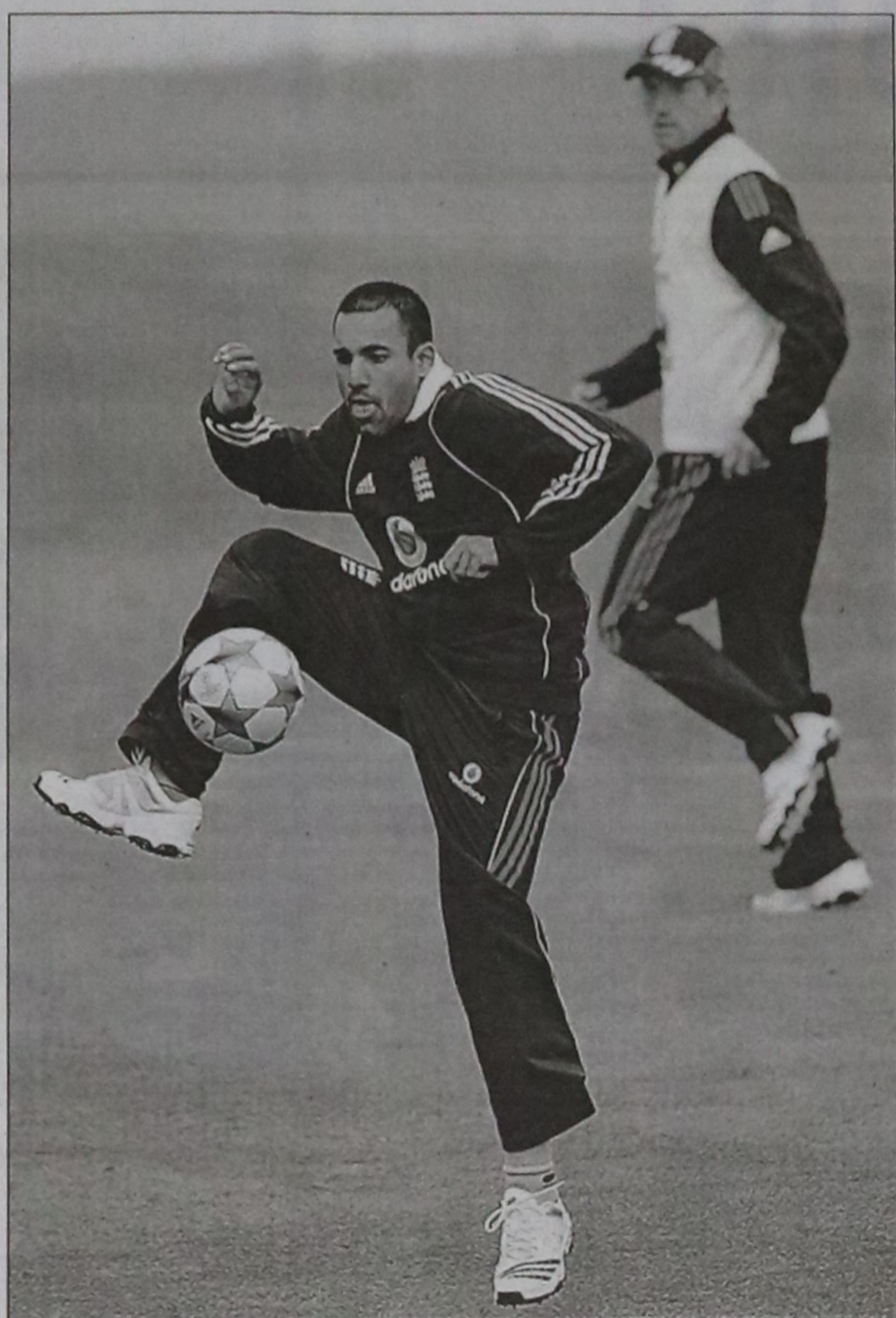
Champions

FROM PAGE 17 Al Musabbir Sadi, Bashundhara Group's brand ambassador and former skipper of national cricket team Naimur Rahman Durjoy and Head of Marketing, Bashundhara Group ZM Ahmed Prince were all present at the unveiling the logo.



Did U Know?

Liverpool is the most successful club in the history of British football, having won 18 league championships, 5 European Cups, 3 UEFA Cups, 7 FA Cups and 7 league cups.



England's Ravi Bopara shows his football skills during a practice session yesterday ahead of their first one-day international against West Indies in Headingley today.

ICL to let fifty go

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

The Indian Cricket League (ICL) has decided to release around 50 players who had sought a return to official cricket. Those released are believed to include New Zealand's Shane Bond, Pakistan's Imran Nazir and Navedul Hasan, Bangladesh's Habibur Bashar and Deep Dasgupta, Abhishek Jhunjhunwala and Hemang Badani from India.

The league will now adopt a two-pronged strategy: start activities afresh by holding talent identification camps and clinics at the six grounds that it controls in India, and pursue legally the ICC's refusal to grant it recognition.

"We will now focus on our October tournament programme," Himanshu Mody, the ICL's business head, told Cricinfo. "We decided to release these players because the ICL is about cricketers, we wouldn't want to stand in their way. We understand that they want to leave us to progress in their careers. You could soon see some of these players in action at the official level, either playing, coaching, or in a management role. Some of them may even turn up for

the IPL, which is good for them. We are only happy to help them benefit professionally."

These players - among the 85 Indians and 70 foreigners with the ICL - had applied for release from the league after various national boards echoed the BCCI's amnesty offer made on April 29. They were asked to put in their requests by May 15, facilitating a return to the official fold by May 31, a day before new and stringent ICC rules on unofficial cricket come into force.

Dasgupta, the former India wicketkeeper who played for ICL's Royal Bengal Tigers, welcomed the league's decision and called it a "positive development" for the players. "It's good to hear about this," Dasgupta told Cricinfo. "It's in line with the ICL's concept that they are always for the cricketers. I am now looking forward to playing in the official set-up and take my career forward."

ICL officials, meanwhile, also confirmed that plans to take on the ICC in a legal battle are still on track. "You can expect a movement on this next week," an official said. Last month, the ICC had rejected the ICL's request for recognition to end months of uncertainty over the issue, including two failed rounds of official talks between the BCCI and the ICL.

FINA to strip French WRs

Swimming

AFP, Sydney

FINA's crackdown on hi-tech swimsuits will make it difficult to ratify new world records by two French swimmers, Australian head coach Alan Thompson said Wednesday.

World swimming's ruling body on Tuesday refused to give approval to 10 swimsuits, including some of those made from polyurethane, the material worn by Fred Bousquet and Alain Bernard.

FINA did not say whether the records set by Bernard and Bousquet during the French championships last month in Montpellier, would be annulled.

Bernard used an X-Glide suit to set a new 100m world record of 46.94sec, while Bousquet beat the world mark in the 50m, recording a time of 20.94. Both records had been held by Australian Eamon Sullivan.

FINA found the Arena "X-Glide" and "Jaked 01" suit needed to be altered to win approval for July's Rome world championships.

Thompson, who is in Lausanne as part of the FINA Commission in charge of swimwear

approval that has been meeting this week, said FINA's decision meant it would be hard to ratify Bousquet and Bernard's swims.

"You would have to think that a world record would need to be swum in a suit that is approved and not a suit that has been modified, that is only my personal opinion," Thompson told reporters here in a teleconference.

Sullivan's coach, Grant Stoelwinder, said the two world records may return to his swimmer. "Obviously, the suit that Alain Bernard wore wasn't an approved suit and that record won't stand."

"The other one is the 50m world record of Eamon's that has been broken was broken in the suit that had pre-approval but now doesn't have approval, so that is going to be an interesting one."

"To me it says FINA has now recognised that it was technology that played a part in breaking that record and it wasn't the individual athlete's own achievements."

Thompson said he believed swimming would be close to a level playing field by next year.

"I think it is going to be as level as possible at the moment and it is certainly a lot more level than it has been and it is getting pretty close to the mark," he said.

Symonds dumped

FROM PAGE 17 captain of a winning Ashes series in England. That's something very dear to my heart.

Ponting believes the experience of beating the Proteas will work in Australia's favour when the Ashes gets underway in Cardiff on July 8.

"We went to South Africa with a less experienced team and we've got an extra three Test matches into some of these guys now," he said.

"You don't face many tougher tasks than playing South Africa over there and our guys came through particularly well so that excites me about what we've got coming up on this tour."

"We've got a great balance of youth and experience, so hopefully when the big

moments come around it will be all of us who stick up our hands and get the job done."

Selectors went for three all-rounders -- Shane Watson, Andrew McDonald and Marcus North -- but there was no room for the 34-year-old Symonds.

Symonds has had a chequered 26-Test career and has not played a Test since Boxing Day last year against South Africa in Melbourne following a season of injury, poor form and off-field personal problems.

Chairman of selectors, Andrew Hilditch, said the selection of injury-prone Watson was subject to his recovery from a groin injury.

Watson said he expected to be bowling next week after recovering from his latest setback and to be fit by the time

the team arrives in England.

Opening batsman Phillip Hughes is the youngest of the tourists at 20, and comes into the Ashes series on the back of scoring four centuries during a six-week English county guest stint with Middlesex.

Ponting's touring party will have a six-strong pace attack, headed by 310-Test wicket-taker Brett Lee and left-armers Mitchell Johnson.

They will be backed up by Stuart Clark, Peter Siddie, Ben Hilfenhaus and Watson, while off spinner Nathan Hauritz was handed the specialist spinner's role, supported by North and left-armers Michael Clarke.

Graham Manou was named as the extra player as back-up wicketkeeper to Brad Haddin.

Veteran dies while playing

AFP, Karachi

A former first-class cricketer died during a veterans Twenty20 match in Pakistan, leaving organisers contemplating a ban on players with a history of cardiac problems, officials said Wednesday.

Javed Sheikh, 53, collapsed during the match at Asghar Ali Shah stadium in Karachi, having complained of chest pain after bowling three overs.

Sheikh, who played for Muslim Commercial Bank during his first-class career in Pakistan, was the second veteran to die this year.

Fakhr Khairi, a 60-year-old skin specialist, died while taking a run during a 60-plus age group match in Karachi earlier this year.

Pakistan Veterans' Cricket Association president Fawad Aijaz deplored the latest death.

"It's sad that Sheikh died during the match and a positive activity for veteran players (has been) turned into a tragedy," Aijaz told AFP.

Chennai

FROM PAGE 17 BRIEF SCORES

CHENNAI: 116-9 in 20 overs (Patel 32, Raina 20; Sreesanth 2-23, Pathan 2-32).

PUNJAB: 92-8 in 20 overs (Pomersbach 26; Muralidharan 2-8, Ashwin 2-13, Raina 2-17, Thushara 2-28).

RESULT: Chennai won by 24 runs.

UCBL Tigers

FROM PAGE 17

Tigers, the private bank has also decided to pay a further US\$ 5,000 per match if Mohammad Ashraf's men qualify for the Super Eights and go further.

Bangladesh has been pitted in Group A and play the first match against defending champions India on June 6 and Ireland on June 8 at Trent Bridge.

The Tigers will leave for England on May 23 and will play additional warm-up games at Wormsley on May 26 (against New Zealand) and May 29 (against Scotland) and then travel to Kent to face Netherlands on May 28. Bangladesh's official practice games are against Australia (on 01 June) and Sri Lanka (on 04 June) at Nottingham.

UCBL will use the tag line 'United Commercial Bank Official Sponsor of the Bangladesh National Cricket Team for ICC World Twenty 20 England 2009' in all their promotional activities during the tenure of this agreement.

BCB senior vice-president Mahbubul Anam, UCBL managing director M Shahjahan Bhuiyan and BCB marketing & commercial committee vice-chairman Syed Farhad Ahmed were present at the ceremony.

KKR oust

FROM PAGE 17 Naman Ojha top-scored for Rajasthan with 22.

SCORES IN BRIEF RAJASTHAN Royals: 101-9 in 20 overs (Ojha 22; Langeveldt 3-15, Agarkar 2-15).

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS: 102-6 in 19.3 overs (Shukla 48 not out; Patel 2-14).

Result: Kolkata won by four wickets. Man-of-the-match: Laxmi Shukla.

13 years for Lewis

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Former England all-rounder, Chris Lewis, has been sentenced to 13 years in prison after being found guilty of smuggling cocaine into the country.

Lewis, 41, was arrested at Gatwick in December last year after a flight from St Lucia, when customs officials found five cans of fruit juice in which cocaine had been dissolved.

He had been travelling with a friend, Chad Kirnon, a former basketball player for London Towers, arriving back from holiday in St Lucia, although the pair were stopped independently at the airport. Lewis said that Kirnon had later offered to take the blame in return for 100,000 pounds from Lewis. Both men received the same 13-year sentence.

Jurors heard that the cocaine, which was found dissolved in the liquid contents of five tins, would at 100 per cent purity weigh 3.37kg, giving the haul an estimated street value of 140,000

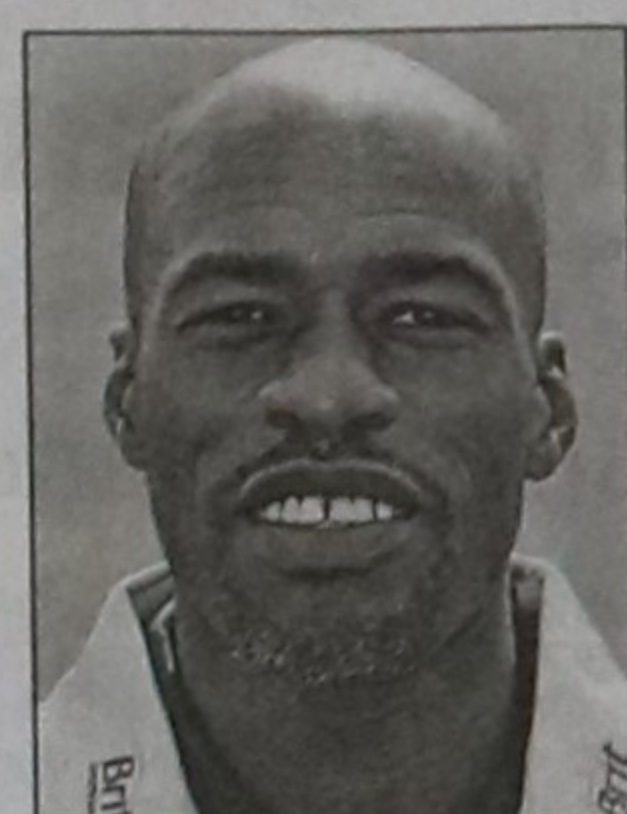
pounds. Traces of cannabis residue were also found in Lewis's luggage, and while he told the jury at Croydon Crown Court he had smoked cannabis while in St Lucia, he said he was "completely innocent" of knowingly smuggling

throughout my life, my cricket career, when things have gone wrong it's gone wrong in a very public way."

Tom Wilkins, prosecuting, told the court that Lewis had been stopped shortly after 5am on 8 December. "When the customs officer pulled him over, Mr Lewis stated that he was travelling alone and had been in St Lucia visiting friends and family," he said. When Lewis's luggage was inspected, the Puma cricket bag was found to be labelled with Kirnon's name, Wilkins told the court.

Lewis is currently in High Down prison where he revealed he is now the anti-bullying representative, as well as working as his block's race-equality rep. "It's a simple one: either you did it and you knew or you didn't," he said. Lewis added that Kirnon, who is also at High Down, had approached him in prison and asked him for 100,000 pounds in exchange for taking the blame.

"Until that point it was a simple case," he said. "You had given me the juice, just say so, story's over. Now he's trying to get a bit of cash out of me."



CHRIS LEWIS

drugs to the country.

He told the jury that Kirnon had asked him to carry the tins of fruit as he was concerned his luggage might be overweight. "I don't necessarily believe that Mr Kirnon wanted me to get caught, but if you infer by Mr Kirnon giving me the cans that he set me up then yes," Lewis said. "Generally



UCBL managing director M Shahjahan Bhuiyan (3rd from L) and BCB Marketing and Commercial Committee vice chairman Syed Farhad Ahmed exchange files after signing the agreement at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Watto beats Simmo

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Selectors have again put their faith in injury-prone all-rounder Shane Watson, believing he will provide the balance to the Australian team for their defence of this year's Ashes against England.

Watson has been the heartbreak kid of Australian cricket with a series of injuries tormenting his playing career and restricting him to just eight Test appearances since his debut in January 2005.

Andrew Hilditch's selection panel showed their belief in the 29-year-old Watson when he was preferred for one of the contested all-rounder spots ahead of Andrew Symonds in the 16-man party for the July-August five-Test series.

Watson was named subject to proving his fitness from a minor groin injury, which forced him to miss a short Indian Premier League stint in South Africa this month.

But he said he expected to bowl in the nets next week and be ready to go for next month's Ashes tour.

"I am really stoked that I have been given an opportunity over Andrew, it's been a bit of a battle, I replaced him during the (last year's) Indian tour and then missed out during the

summer here for the first few Tests," Watson said Wednesday.

"Of course, it's bitter-sweet because I love the opportunity of playing Test cricket for Australia and you feel for one of your mates if he doesn't get picked."

"But I will definitely be making the most of it and having a lot of fun."

Watson, who has been derailed in the past by stress back injuries, has been vying with Symonds as the all-rounder in the Australian team since Andrew Flintoff's match-winning exploits with bat and ball for England in the 2005 Ashes series.

"Initially, I got my opportunity in the (2006-07) Ashes and unfortunately I got injured and Andrew (Symonds) made the most of that opportunity and has been performing well over the last couple of years," Watson said.

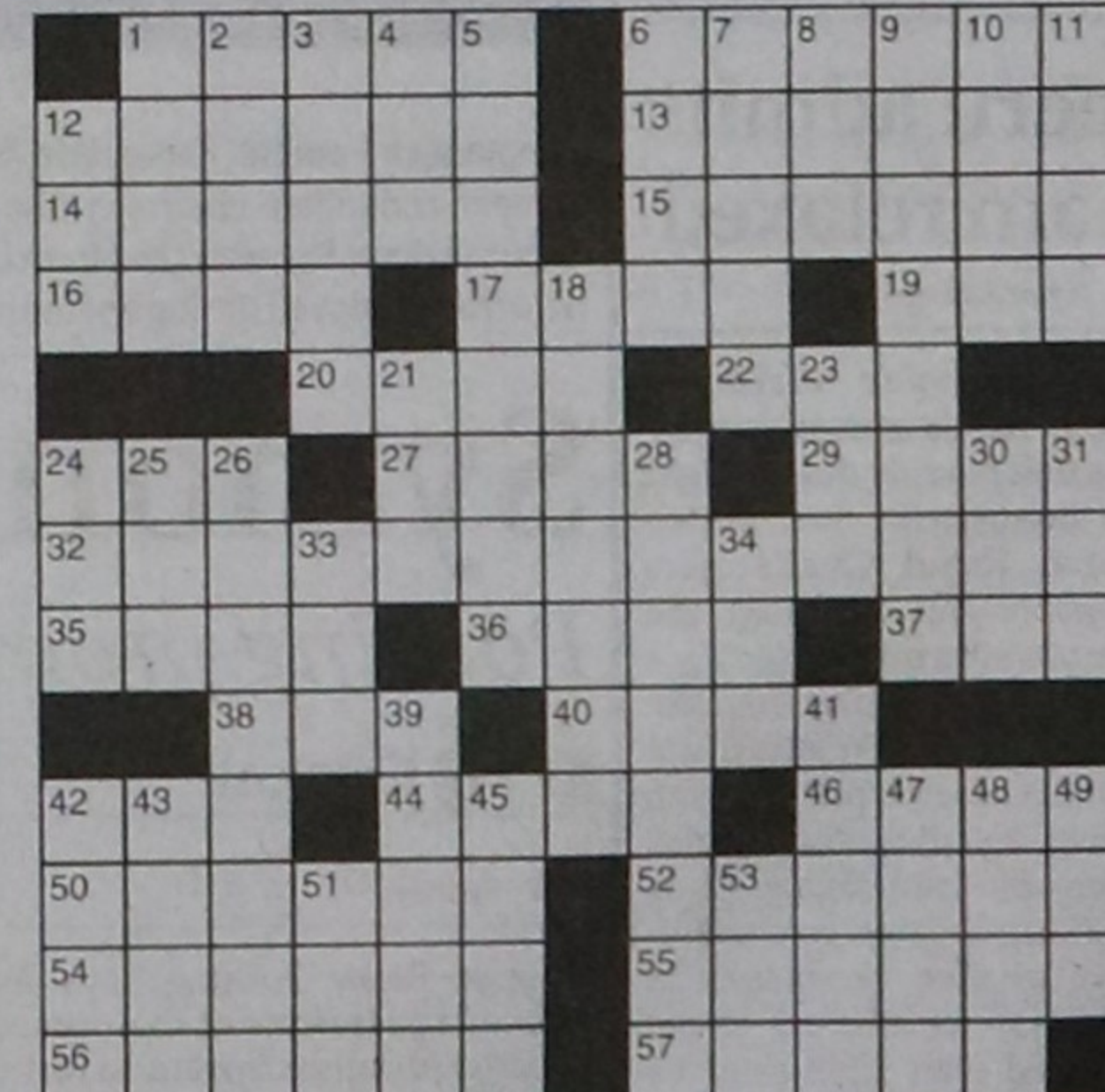
"But in recent times he hasn't helped himself in regards to what he's been doing and I've just got to make the most of the opportunity that's presented itself."

Hilditch vouched for Watson's qualities to be included in Australia's squad.

"Shane was in extremely good form before his minor injury and in addition he gives us quality pace bowling and he's capable of batting anywhere in the top six, so we think he's a very good selection for the Ashes tour," Hilditch said.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 Core familiar, usually weapons 6 Cavalry 12 "South Pacific" role 13 Talisman 14 Square-muzzled primate 15 Cure 16 Family wolf 17 "Wheel of Fortune" option 19 "Friends" cast member 20 Be -slack-jawed 22 Banned bug spray 24 Balloon fill 27 Peruse 29 Approximately 32 Robert Wagner TV series 35 Paraphernalia 36 Knighted woman



CRYPTOQUIP

IDMHJAD SJB RHXG RHUHQDB T SJIGDA HA HU DRMDD. NDSNGD RXQWC MHGG WXR H NSACRHACDB CSHACRHACDB. Yesterday's Cryptoquip: AFTER PLACING A COUPLE OF COCKTAILS ON HIS ROOF, THE GUY HAD TO CRY "DRINKS ARE ON THE HOUSE!" Today's Cryptoquip Clue: H equals A