

Anxious times for Steyn

CRICINFO, undated

Dale Steyn is not a certain starter for the Boxing Day Test in Durban and expects an early decision to be made over his hamstring injury. The South African fast bowler was ruled out of the opening match at Centurion on the morning of the game, handing a debut to Friedel de Wet, who almost bowled South Africa to victory with 4 for 55 on the final day Sunday.

Steyn will spend the next two days putting in further rehabilitation work and remains hopeful of rejoining the South Africa line-up. However, he doesn't want any doubt hanging over the side as they prepare for the second Test and is targeting Wednesday -- when the squad meets up in Durban -- as his keytime.

"I've got until Wednesday to get it ready," he told Cricinfo. "I think we will make an early decision this time on whether I will play, rather than wait until the morning of the game. That puts other players under stress and basically throws the guys into the ocean."

"I'm hopeful. I was very keen to play in Pretoria and having a few more days off has given me extra time to get it right, so I don't see any reason why I shouldn't be ready for Boxing Day."

"I just want to make sure it's 100 per cent because we have a lot of cricket to play, not just against England but also a tour to India, and hamstrings can be quite a difficult area to sort out. Just when you think you've got it right, it hits you again and slows you down. We are hoping that everything will be right for Durban, that's the goal, and we've been working really hard."

PCL surprise!

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permatch.

After signing up the Pakistani duo, Top Sports chairman AKM Mahbubur Rashid said that they were waiting to come up with more surprises as each side of the league could field three foreign players against four registrations.

Naved played for Mohammad while Razzak played for Abahani in the Premier Cricket League's Superphase.

Messi voted

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best players of the world.

Ronaldo won the Puskas award for his goal for Manchester United in the Champions League against Porto, while the following were elected into the FIFA/FIFProWorld XI.

Goalkeeper: Iker Casillas (Real Madrid/Spain)

Defenders: John Terry (Chelsea/England), Nemanja Vidic (Manchester United/Serbia), Patrice Evra (Manchester United/France) and Dani Alves (Barcelona/Spain)

Midfielders: Xavi Hernandez (Barcelona/Spain); Andres Iniesta (Barcelona/Spain), Steven Gerrard (Liverpool/England)

Forwards: Lionel Messi (Barcelona/Spain), Cristiano Ronaldo (Real Madrid/Spain) and Fernando Torres (Liverpool/Spain)

FACTFILE

Name: Lionel Messi
Date of birth: June 24, 1987
Place of birth: Rosario, Argentina

Height: 1.69 m (5 ft 7 in)
Weight: 67 kg
Playing position: Striker

International Caps: 44
Goals scored: 13
Club: Barcelona - since 2005
Club Honours

Primera Liga (3): 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2008-2009
Spanish Cup (1): 2008-2009
Spanish SuperCup (3): 2005, 2006, 2009

UEFA Champions League (2): 2005-2006, 2008-2009
UEFA Super Cup (1): 2009
International Honours

FIFA-20 World Cup: 2005
Olympic Gold Medal: 2008
Individual Honours

UEFA Champions League Top Scorer: 2008-2009 (9 goals)
Spanish footballer of the year: 2008-2009

FIFA World Player of the Year: 2009
Ballon d'Or: 2009



Pakistan paceman Navedul Hasan (2nd from L) and all-rounder Abdul Razzak (2nd from R) attend a press conference at a city hotel on Monday after signing for Noakhali Top Sports in Port City League, which will be held in the desert city of Sharjah in March next year.

Veeru thanks bowlers

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Indian captain Virender Sehwag has praised his bowlers for their performance in the third ODI against Sri Lanka in Cuttack. The hosts won comfortably by seven wickets on Monday to take a 2-1 lead in the five-match series.

After Kumar Sangakkara, his opposite number, opted to bat, a solid performance from Sri Lanka's top order had put them on course for a massive total but India's bowlers hit back to shoot out the visitors -- who were 160 for 1 after 22 overs -- for 239 in the 45th over.

"The credit for this victory ought to go to the bowlers, especially Harbhajan [Singh] and [Ravindra] Jadeja," Sehwag said. "The wicket was slow and it kept low at times and it helped the spinners a bit."

"With the kind of start they got, I was praying they wouldn't get 350 or 400 on the board," Sehwag said. "But we were constantly looking to take wickets and Ashish Nehra did a fantastic job during the Powerplay."

"Once he got [Tillakaratne] Dilshan out, Harbhajan and Jadeja did their job very well and the game turned on its head."

Sehwag then got India's chase off to a lightning start with 44 from 28 deliveries, while fellow-opener Sachin Tendulkar remained

unbeaten on 96 as India made light work of the target, getting home with 7.2 overs to spare.

"My job is to give the team a good start and score as many as I can," Sehwag said. "I was in good form and I utilised the first 10 overs very well. Tendulkar then played right through the innings and ensured we won. Overall, this was an excellent team performance."

His Sri Lankan counterpart blamed the defeat on the poor batting display after his side lost their last eight wickets for 74 runs. "We had everything going for us: a blazing start, a good partnership which I managed to put on with Tharanga which gave us a good base," Sangakkara said. "But too many wickets lost and that was probably the story of the game."

"We didn't really have a target in mind at the start but the focus was on keeping rhythm, working hard and building partnerships. We just lost too many wickets and with it momentum."

Sangakkara said Sri Lanka had effectively lost the game in the early overs of the Indian reply. "We had to try and get something with the new ball but these are not the easiest of wickets to bowl on. The bowlers did a really good job and we were good in the field as well but we really had nothing to defend."

"We need to take a good look at ourselves as individuals and take a lot more responsibility when we get out there again. We have got to keep fighting and we have got to come back."

V-Day Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Hockey Federation XI almost confirmed their final berth of the Victory Day Hockey Tournament with a 4-2 win over Bangladeshi Air Force at the Moula Bhasani National Stadium yesterday.

The third win in as many matches put BHFI comprising national players, top of the five-team point table with a maximum nine points, five ahead of joint second-placed Bangladesh Army and BKSP.

Bangladesh Air Force, on the other hand, remained winless playing three outings.

Manik gave BHFI a first-minute lead through a field goal before Air Force bounced back to level the margin in the seventh minute with Shahidul converting a penalty corner. The BHFI went to the breather with a 2-1 lead as defender Chayan converted a penalty corner in the 16th minute.

After the lemon break, Jimmy widened the margin in the 41st minute while two minutes later, Hosne Mubarak reduced the margin for Air Force.

Nannu struck the team's fourth goal in 59th minute to seal the fate of the game.

V-Day tennis

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Alam declared the meet open as chief guest while its general secretary Iftaque Ahmed Curren and tournament director Delwar Rahman were among others present. The qualifying round and the second round games will be held today.

Yuvraj out

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last week boosted his chances of a national recall with a triple-century for Mumbai against Gujarat during the Ranji Trophy.

The Indian selectors are expected to make an announcement shortly. The fourth ODI is in Kolkata on December 24, followed by the final game in Delhi on December 27.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

35 Put through

1 Cauldron

4 Harvest

the goddess

7 One of

Franklin's

37 Morsel

38 Prayer

certainties

12 Inseparable

13 Tear

14 Pond

15 Felonious

16 Keeps

17 Shrill

18 Nimble

20 Front

21 Spill

the beans

27 Rowing

need

29 Private

gesture?

31 Extra

benefit

34 Orion's

brightest

star

DOWN

25 Noshed

1 Coral

28 Nay

2 Where

the elated

30 Jackie's

second

3 Beat

31 Coll.

Carl

32 Post

Sales

pitch

33 Loony

48 Pancakes

52 "Hail!"

53 Blood

line?

54 Mauna —

55 Journey

56 Oil of

roses

57 Bobby

of

hockey

lore

58 Crafty

along

Solution time: 25 mins.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

12 13 14

15 16 17

18 19

20 21 22

23 30

27 28

34

35 36 37

38 39 40

45 46 47

48 49 50 51

53 54 55

56 57 58

CRYPTOQUIP

E P M Y A Z I S Q Z C B A M S S Y P B

R B Z R S B E P Z O M T N B Q Y P B

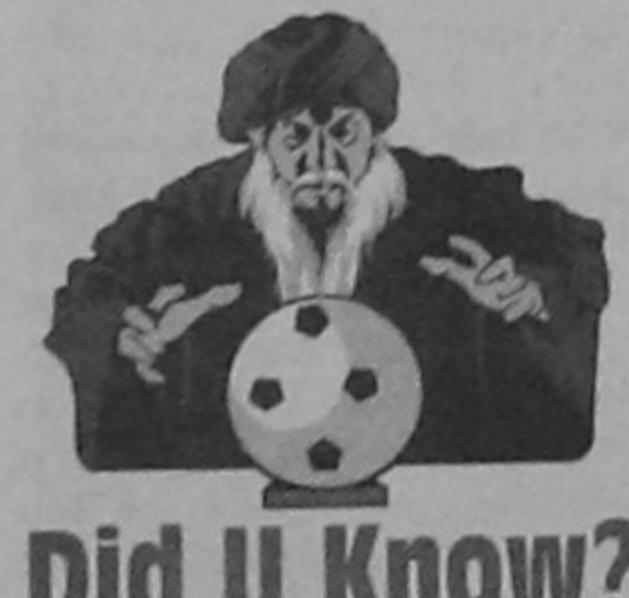
E O T Y B O Z H "ZP! N I N M C C M ?

H Z N Y B O R M O B C Y N

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: FAMOUS SITCOM

ABOUT A HAIR-COLORING SALON RUN BY A MOTHER AND HER DAUGHTERS: "FAMILY DYES."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R equals P



Scotland were the only team not to be beaten in the 1974 World Cup.

Mashrafe retained

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"We will appoint a new selector very soon. We don't think there are any hard-and-fast rules in the terms and condition," said Yunus.

SHAKIL KASEM NAMED HEAD OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF NCA

The management committee for the GP-BCB National Cricket Academy (NCA) has been approved. Former cricketers and former chairman of the development committee Shakil Kasem will head the committee.

The other members are Gazi Ashraf Hossain, ASM Roquibul

Hasan, Mohammed Jalal Yunus, Selim Shahed, Jahangir Shah Badshah, Golam Mortaza and a representative from Grameenphone, who are sponsoring the academy.

"A" TEAM LOCAL SUPPORT STAFF
BCB has decided to appoint some local staffs for the Bangladesh A team. Former national skipper Minhazul Abedin is likely to be appointed as head coach of the second string Bangladesh side.

EIGHT-MEMBER COMMITTEE FOR 2011 WORLD CUP
An eight-member committee

has been formed for monitoring the development work and procurement related to the 2011 World Cup and the members are Mahbubul Anam, Dewan Shaiful Arefin, Gazi Ashraf Hossain, GS Hassan Chowdhury, Mohammed Jalal Yunus, Syed Zahid Hossain, Shafiqur Rahman and Sirajuddin Mohammed Alamgir.

EXCLUSIVE MEETING FOR AGM

An exclusive meeting