

Mourinho slams 'sleepy' Benzema

Real Madrid coach Jose Mourinho has warned French striker Karim Benzema that he needs to change his attitude if he is to be a success in Spain. Mourinho was overheard giving Benzema a wake-up call in training on Thursday. "If it was just for you I would make training at midday because you arrive at 10 o'clock half asleep and then by 11 you are already sleeping again," Mourinho allegedly told Benzema in front of his teammates. According to Marca, this was not the first time that Mourinho has had a go at Benzema.



Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (foreground) takes off as teammates Abdur Razzak and Imrul Kayes (R) look on during their training session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

A pleasing day on the field

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The long run-up to the 2011 World Cup began yesterday with the national cricketers having a long slog in the nets as well as in the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium outfield.

One would be tempted to go the distance and call it the perfect start as Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's men were given a thorough workout, having been divided into four groups for batting, fielding, bowling and a stint at the gym. Each group were trained for two hours each and when the batsmen, the breed who are never willing to leave the nets, are asked to bat for two hours instead of the usual 30 minutes, they would highly appreciate the new system of training.

Tamim Iqbal, predictably, came out in praise of the long batting sessions and the overall training after the left-handed opener completing his two-hour stint at the nets outside the stadium.

"I believe it was an excellent batting session that lasted more than two hours. It's a new system and it hasn't happened before," said Tamim, repeating the mantra that more the batsmen bat, the better they will become.

"I think we can give a good performance in the New Zealand series if we continue to train in this manner. Today (Sunday) we had three bowling

machines and we could play all kinds of shots. It's a lot of batting but it wasn't a lot of hard work," said the man who is among the 16 nominated cricketers vying for the ICC Test Player of the Year.

"We used to get less time in the past but now we have some time in our hand and Jamie [Siddons] has planned that every player should get individual attention from him.

"In addition, we now have a fielding coach and a bowling coach is on the way, so I think it is a positive sign," said Tamim, who was hopeful of returning before the New Zealand series after a checkup on his wrist in Australia.

Tamim's captain Mashrafe pointed out that the training camp is three weeks long and the Tigers have not done well in the field for quite a long time too. But the start has been good and according to Mashrafe, if this amount of hard work continues, the Tigers could improve ahead of the five-match one-day series against the Black Caps.

"I quite liked the first day's work but a lot of it is left, in fact three weeks so I hope it continues like this," said Mashrafe.

The entire idea of individual skill improvement comes from the head coach and he reiterated his plan.

"I always wanted to put emphasis on this kind of training as it gives me opportunity to work with them individually for a longer span of time, as the preparation for the series is still more than a month away," said Siddons.

JFA Cup set to be back

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has decided to reintroduce the JFA (Japan Football Association) U-15 Cup in November after failing to organise the age-group tournament for the last two seasons.

The fourth edition of the JFA Cup, funded by the Japan Football Association, ended in early 2008 when the Asian giants had provided 25,000 US dollars to hold the fifth edition of the meet, but the BFF spent the amount in development sectors such as holding the U-14 and U-16 football camps instead.

The game's local governing body then sought further allotment from the JFA, who refused to provide any additional fund, saying that they had already provided fund for the tournament.

A representative of the JFA has also visited Bangladesh to look into the matter and the BFF has yet to get any response from the JFA.

BFF development committee's decision on

Sunday to bring back the JFA Cup is apparently a move to regain the faith of the JFA, who, however, did not give any assurance to the BFF that they would again provide the fund if the BFF resumed the U-15 football tournament across the country.

Another reason behind bringing back the JFA Cup is to scout players for the AFC U-16 football meet, scheduled for next year.

In 2008, a total of 59 district teams along with the BKSP took part in the fourth edition of the nationwide regular junior football meet.

The meeting also decided to hold the U-18 trials across the country in September after the Eid vacation and then stage a final camp with around 70 under-18 booters in Dhaka in a bid to build a team for the next year's AFC U-19 meet.

The development committee meeting, presided over Kazi Nabil Ahmed, also decided to send a U-17 team to Delhi to take part in the Shuvroto Mukharjee Cup football tournament to be held from November 10 to December 2.

The tournament's organising committee also invited BFF U-14 team in the same tournament and the BFF decided to send the invitation to BKSP, the country's lone educational institute that takes part in the tournament on a regular basis.

Perera fires SL into final

Cricket

AFP, Dambulla

Thisara Perera bagged a maiden five-wicket haul to help Sri Lanka storm into the Micromax Cup triangular one-day series final with a crushing eight-wicket win over India on Sunday.

The 21-year-old seamer, playing his first match of the tournament, finished with 5-28 off 7.4 tight overs as India were shot out for 103 in 33.4 overs -- their third-lowest total against Sri Lanka in one-day internationals.

The total was not enough to put pressure on Sri Lanka, who completed the win in just 15.1 overs in the day-night match at the Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium.

The hosts finished their league engagements with 11 points from four matches, while New Zealand have seven points and India five after three games.

The winners of the last league match between India and New Zealand on Wednesday will qualify for the final.

Sri Lanka put in a solid all-round performance in the must-win match as their batsmen backed their fast bowlers, with Tillakaratne Dilshan (35) and Mahela Jayawardene (33) adding 79 for the opening wicket in 9.2 overs.

Skipper Kumar Sangakkara (13 not out) finished the match when he drove paceman Ishant Sharma through the covers for a four. Upul Tharanga remained unbeaten with 12.

Yuvraj Singh earlier top-scored with a fighting 38 in a

disappointing Indian batting performance after the tourists elected to bat.

Opener Virender Sehwag (12), Rohit Sharma (11) and skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni (10) were the others to reach double-figures.

Yuvraj was unlucky to be given out leg-before off paceman Lasith Malinga (2-21) as TV replays suggested the ball would have missed the stumps. He was the ninth man out after hitting one six and five fours in his 64-ball knock.

Sri Lanka jolted India when paceman Nuwan Kulasekara (2-31) trapped Sehwag leg-before and had Dinesh Karthik (nine) caught behind in a lively opening spell.

Perera, who played his last one-day in Zimbabwe in June, then wrecked the middle order when he claimed four wickets in five overs to dash India's hopes of posting a challenging total.

He was once on a hatrick when he had Ravindra Jadeja caught by Chamara Silva at gully and Praveen Kumar caught by Tharanga at mid-off with his next delivery.

Perera ended the innings in the 34th over when he bowled Ishant Sharma.

The Sri Lankan pacemen were well supported by wicket-keeper Sangakkara, who took four catches.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: 103 all out (Sehwag 12, Sharma 11, Yuvraj 38, Raina 8, Dhoni 10; Malinga 2-21, Kulasekara 2-31, Perera 5-28)

SRI LANKA: 104 for 2 (Jayawardene 33, Dilshan 35, Tharanga 12 not out, Sangakkara 13 not out; Sharma 2-15)

Result: Sri Lanka won by eight wickets. Man-of-the-match: Thisara Perera.



PHOTO: AFP

FIVE-STAR PERERA: Sri Lanka seamer Thisara Perera shows the ball with which he claimed his maiden five-for at the end of the India innings in the Micromax Cup tri-series at the Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium yesterday.

Rajib simply can't bowl

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The national cricket camp got off to a smooth start yesterday, but paceman Shahadat Hossain Rajib was restricted on the sidelines with an injury to the little finger on his right leg.

The paceman suffered the blow during a one-day match against India in January this year and has been playing with the damaged finger for more than seven months now.

It now seems that he can no longer continue bowling as the finger has swelled and there is a lot of pain. According to physio Debashish Chowdhury, Rajib has torn tissues in that area causing the inflammation.

The Narayanganj lad was prescribed medicines for the injury from time to time in the last few months, and also a special injection prepared by Debashish. He requires another injection and if that still doesn't reduce the swelling or the pain, he would need an operation probably in Australia.

According to sources, the paceman expects the board to send him abroad as a big season is ahead of the national cricketers.

Due to his injury, Rajib has only done work in the gym for the last few weeks.

Pak cricketers' donation for flood victims

REUTERS, London

Pakistan cricketers have dedicated a proportion of their match fees to victims of the floods which have devastated their country following an upset win over England in the third Test at The Oval.

The floods, which have affected a third of the country over the past three weeks, have killed at least 1,600 people and left more than four million homeless.

Captain Salman Butt told reporters his team had dedicated the victory to the flood victims.

"We have already donated a percentage of our match fees," he said. "This is the only way we can give back to the Pakistan people if we perform well."

England captain Andrew Strauss said his team would

Pakistan over the moon

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan's top political leaders, under fire over their handling of disastrous floods, took time out Sunday to praise the country's cricket side after its victory in the third Test over England.

Captain Salman Butt dedicated the four-wicket victory at The Oval to the millions hit by Pakistan's worst-ever floods.

"The only thing we could do is win a good game to bring some cheer to them," he said. "We name this victory to the victims of the floods."

President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani -- who faced virulent criticism for the government's faltering relief effort -- both sent messages of congratulation to the touring cricketers.

"The team deserves congratulation," said Zardari's message to Butt, expressing hope the

side would play in the same spirit in the concluding Test at Lord's from Thursday.

Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Ijaz Butt, who has faced calls from some Pakistani lawmakers to resign after the team lost the first two Tests against England, also praised the side's spirit.

"The whole team displayed tremendous character and professionalism to carve out a deserved victory," he said in a message.

"All the boys fought like a unit with Mohammad Yousuf showing his class," the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) head said of the recalled veteran batsman, who made 56 and 33 at The Oval.

Former captain Aamir Sohail blamed the PCB selectors for hampering Pakistan in England.

"We would have won the series 3-0 had we done proper selection of the squad before the tour, because England have proved to be an over-rated team," Sohail said, calling for the recall of batsmen Younus Khan and Taufeeq Umer.

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PHOTO: AFP

Barcelona sensation Lionel Messi (above) is congratulated by teammates Daniel Alves (R) and Bojan Krkic (L) after completing his hatrick during their Supercup triumph against Sevilla at the Camp Nou on Saturday.

SPORTS POLL

TODAY'S QUESTION

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English Premiership Man City v Liverpool

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