

Out camping!

England's cricketers have returned from their top-secret pre-Ashes bonding camp, which took them to Bavaria in southern Germany. The players were told just to bring passports and walking boots and leave mobile phones behind, so there was no tweeting from Graeme Swann or Kevin Pietersen during the trip. They have spent the last few days near Nuremberg taking part in boxing (as Monty Panesar is seen here), hiking and abseiling. The trip ended on Tuesday by a visit to the memorial site at Dachau, the first of Hitler's concentration camps where more than 40,000 people died.



New Zealand captain Daniel Vettori (foreground) throws the ball during a light training session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Shakib the main threat: Vettori

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

New Zealand captain Daniel Vettori said on Wednesday that they singled out Shakib Al Hasan, the world's number one all-rounder, as the main threat in next week's five-match one-day series.

And the Kiwis' skipper believes that the absence of dashing opener Tamim Iqbal, who was ruled out for the series due to a surgery on his left wrist, is a big loss for the home side who are also going to miss the services of experienced batsman Mohammad Ashraful who was out of the team because of his poor form.

"We have seen the Bangladesh team improved. Obviously Shakib (Al Hasan) is probably their best player, so if we can nullify him we know we are going to win. He is a very good player, he has proven himself particularly in these conditions, so he is probably their main player," said Vettori when asked who would be their main threat in the series while speaking at an official press conference in Mirpur yesterday.

"I think we have some similarity, we both bat down the order at the same position and we both bowl left-arm spin. And Shakib was captain for a while, so there was some obvious comparison. The key for us hopefully is that we can play a role in our team winning. Obviously you want to try and out-think the opposition as much as you can. And Shakib is probably our main opposition," he added when asked of his comparison with Shakib.

"Ashraful has been dropped, hasn't he? Obviously he is not in form. [Tamim] Iqbal is injured, so that's big loss for Bangladesh. He

scored a lot of runs at the top of the order. So he will be a loss throughout the series," he said.

The 31-year-old all-rounder, who so far played 100 Tests and 255 ODIs, said that the tough task await for them but he was confident about a clean sweep against Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's men.

"I think Bangladesh have improved. They are particularly good at home. Obviously we came here to win but we know it's going to be a tough series," said Vettori.

"We are just thinking about those first couple of warm-up games and we just got off to playing. So we know it's a tough task. But I think you have to play really well to win every game you have and that's the way to go," he added when asked whether they were expecting a 5-0 result.

The visitors will play two warm-up games on October 1 and 3 at BKSP before the start of the one-day series on October 5.

The Kiwis skipper reiterated that there was no scope for them to take the Tigers lightly especially at their own den and they need to give their best if they want to win the series convincingly.

"We are confident as we have got some very good players, particularly our batting line-up with (Jesse) Ryder, (Brendon) McCullum and (Ross) Taylor at the top, a lot of expectation on us. We are looking forward to winning the series," he said.

Vettori once again said that the matches in the subcontinent will work as a build-up tour for the 2011 World Cup.

"I think that's one of the best reasons to be here. To experience the conditions for a number of guys who have not been here before. We are lucky enough to be in Sri Lanka, and then we go to India after this series so we get to go all three host nations before the World Cup," he said.

Contrasting wins for Khulna, Ctg

SPORTS REPORTER

Khulna and Chittagong won their respective matches of the 4th Women's National Cricket League at the Sylhet Divisional Stadium yesterday.

The matches were a welcome relief for organisers, after two full days were washed out due to rain.

In the day's first match, Chittagong beat Barisal by four wickets in a thrilling finish.

Batting first, Barisal scored 74-7 from 20 overs with Shahnaz Parvin scoring 16. In reply, Champa Chakma's 29 was vital as Chittagong reached 75 runs off the last ball of the match.

Khulna had an easier time, reaching 54 for one from 16 over against hosts Sylhet, who made 53-7 from 20 overs.

Aussies wary of Sehwag

AFP, Mohali

Australia's players have crafted tactics to subdue opener Virender Sehwag and deny India an early advantage in the first Test, Australia cricket coach Tim Nielsen said Wednesday.

Sehwag is known for his hard-hitting and dominating the opposition's bowling attack with his rich stroke-play, easing pressure on his teammates in the process.

"He has such a damaging effect at the top of the order and we have spoken about that. The individual players have plans on how to counter his aggressive style of play," Nielsen said ahead of the opening Test starting on Friday.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

Aussie bowlers face stiff test

Cricket

AFP, Mohali

Australia expect their bowlers to put in a sharp and disciplined performance in a bid to keep pressure on India's strong batting line-up in the opening Test starting on Friday.

They failed to find match-winning bowlers on their last tour of India in 2008 when they lost a four-Test series 2-0, with six batsmen aggregating more than 300 runs for the home team.

In contrast, only two Australians -- Michael Hussey and Simon Katich -- could manage more than 300 in the series on slow Indian pitches.

Australia have lost much of their bowling strength after the retirements of fast bowler Glenn McGrath and leg-spin wizard Shane Warne, who were capable of delivering in all conditions.

Their attack wears a different look this time, with pacemen Mitchell Johnson and Shane Watson being the only bowlers to have figured in the last Test series in India.

The other bowlers, including paceman Doug Bollinger and spinner Nathan Hauritz, face a big challenge to keep pressure on the Indian batsmen who have often flourished in home conditions.

India have exciting batsmen in Virender Sehwag, Sachin Tendulkar and skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who can dominate any attack with their stroke-play.

"There are two key issues for Australia which I believe will be pivotal to their success," former

Australian player Tom Moody recently wrote in his column in the Times of India.

"The first being the Aussies haven't had much cricket as a unit and have also had a disrupted winter which means they will need to get into their stride very quickly in what is normally challenging conditions.

"Getting acclimatised as quickly as possible will be the key. The second key factor will be making sure the likes of Johnson and company get enough bowling rhythm in before the first Test and don't use the first innings or first Test as their warm-up."

Australia captain Ricky Ponting conceded ahead of the tour that he did not expect miracles from his fourth-ranked team against number one India.

"I don't expect miracles, but expect a very high level of performance over the next few weeks," Ponting said before the team's departure for India for two Tests and three one-day internationals.

"It's an important tour for all of us." Australia, who recently drew a two-Test series with Pakistan in England, will also need to give a solid batting display against a full-strength Indian bowling attack.

The hosts' attack has been strengthened with the return of left-arm paceman Zaheer Khan, who missed a three-Test series in Sri Lanka in July-August due to an injury.

Ponting will be keen to improve upon his average of just 20.85 in India, where he scored just one century in 12 Tests and was troubled by off-spinner Harbhajan Singh.

Harbhajan, who has so far taken 79 wickets

SEE PAGE 18 COL 2

Micromax to sponsor ODI series

SPORTS REPORTER

The five-match one-day series between Bangladesh and New Zealand will be named the Micromax ODI Cup after Micromax Informatic Limited bought the title sponsorship rights from Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

Micromax, a cell phone manufacturer from India, earned the sponsorship by providing US dollars 3.35 lakh.

"They have made the deal by providing US dollars 3.35 lakh that also included US dollar 1 lakh as prize money," informed BCB's new CEO Manzur Ahmed at a press conference in Mirpur yesterday.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 1

What to WATCH

TEN Sports
Europa League
Dortmund v Sevilla
Live from 11:00pm

ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm

Modi gets the axe

Cricket

AFP, Mumbai

Indian cricket bosses on Wednesday replaced the suspended chief of the Indian Premier League, Lalit Modi, capping the demise of one of the game's most high-profile and controversial figures.

Modi, the brash driving force behind the money-spinning IPL, was removed as the chairman of the tournament, as vice-president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and as head of the BCCI marketing committee.

"The present IPL governing council has been dissolved," BCCI President Shashank Manohar told a packed press conference in Mumbai after a general annual meeting. "All decisions were taken unanimously by the members."

The changes complete the fall of Modi from one of the most powerful world cricket figures to a tarnished outsider who is now fighting to salvage his reputation after he was suspended in April on allegations of corruption.

The new IPL boss will be Chirayu Amin, who owns Alembic pharmaceutical company and was formerly vice-president of the BCCI, while Rajiv Shukla, a ruling-party politician and cricket insider, was named BCCI vice-president.

Another politician, Farooq Abdullah, was appointed head of the BCCI marketing committee in place of Modi.

The 46-year-old scion of a prominent business family, Modi was virtually unknown outside cricket circles until five years ago.

He first hit the headlines when he joined political heavyweight Sharad Pawar in an acrimonious but successful campaign to wrestle

control of the BCCI from long-time incumbent Jagmohan Dalmiya in 2005.

A grateful Pawar rewarded Modi by ensuring his election as the youngest vice-president of the country's richest sporting body, whose assets were then worth an estimated 50 million dollars.

Three years later, BCCI revenues had tripled after Modi launched the glitzy IPL to counter a rebel Twenty20 league owned by the country's largest listed media house, Zee Telefilms.

Shortly after the conclusion of the third edition of the wildly popular tournament earlier this year, during which Modi parted with players and presented the winning trophy, his fortunes reversed dramatically.

He was suspended as the IPL chairman following allegations of corruption, indiscipline and money-laundering.

His troubles began when he revealed the ownership details of a new franchise set to join the tournament next year.

This embarrassed a high-profile member of the government, junior foreign minister Shashi Tharoor, because Tharoor's then-girlfriend and now wife had been given a free stake in the new team.

The minister was forced to resign under pressure from the opposition, which accused him of abusing his office to secure personal gain, with the free stake seen as a possible kickback.

The government then launched an investigation into the IPL, which led to multiple charges against Modi, who continues to be investigated by a three-member disciplinary committee set up by the BCCI.

Probes into the murky world of IPL business led the BCCI to issue new notices on Wednesday to three teams.

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4

India embraces vuvuzela

AFP, New Delhi



The vuvuzela trumpets that became the droning soundtrack to the football World Cup in South Africa are to make a comeback at the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi.

Vuvuzelas provoked strong emotions in South Africa, with some fans loving the distinctive low-pitched bellow while others -- including many players, coaches and commentators -- driven to distraction.

About 10,000 plastic vuvuzela horns have already been sold in Delhi through official merchandising outlets at a cost of 250 rupees (5.5 dollars) each.

"Both Indian and foreigners have been showing a lot of interest, and sales are very good," Jitendra Dang, who runs a stall at the athletes' village, told AFP.

"It feels that their popularity after South Africa is continuing in India."

Vuvuzelas became the unofficial symbol of the World Cup, but they drowned out crowd

chants and made it nearly impossible for players to communicate with each other.

The horns have since been banned by UEFA, European football's governing body, and by several English Premier League club grounds, as well as at many other sporting events.

Indian sports fans are known for their passion -- especially at cricket games -- but tickets are still available for most Games events and it is uncertain if venues will fill with the vuvuzela's monotone blast.

Suresh Kumar, chairman of the Games' official merchandising company Premier Brands, said 50,000 vuvuzelas had been imported from China and 10,000 had already been bought from stalls, shops and from mobile vans.

"People here like them because in India we associate celebrations with noise," he told AFP. "Festivals like Diwali are always very loud."

"Vuvuzelas are the most popular item we are selling. We expect the rest to go by the middle of the Games. And if we have a shortage, we can't get any more because they were ordered from China."

The origins of the vuvuzela -- and the word's

SEE PAGE 18 COL 4



India Sports Minister MS Gill (L) blows a vuvuzela as Commonwealth Games Organising Committee chairman Suresh Kalmadi looks on at the Games Village in New Delhi yesterday. The Indian capital is scheduled to host the biggest sporting event October 3-14.

PHOTO: AFP

SPORTS POLL

Will Liverpool make it into the top four this season?

No 67.6%

Yes 32.4%

TOTAL VOTES: 368

TODAY'S QUESTION

Which team is favourite to win the India-Australia Test series?

Visit the sports page of www.thedailystar.net to cast vote

Follow The Daily Star Sport on [twitter](https://twitter.com/dspsport)

www.twitter.com/dspsport