



PHOTO: INTERNET

Ian Bell drives one on his way to a match-winning century against Prime Minister's XI in Canberra on Monday.

Eng breeze past PM's XI

Cricket

AFP, Canberra

Ian Bell's sparkling tour Down Under continued on Monday as he scored an unbeaten century to guide England to a seven-wicket win over the Australian Prime Minister's XI in a one-day match. Chasing 223 to win in the rain-affected match, Bell blasted 13 fours and a towering six as he reached 124 from just 102 balls. He also scored a century in the final Ashes Test last week, which England won to beat Australia 3-1. The PM's XI traditionally gives fringe Australian players and promising youngsters a hit against a touring side. But while the home side batted well, their bowling attack appeared toothless in the face of the Bell onslaught. Bell was given good support by Jonathan Trott (48) and Steve Davies (24), who helped England get away to a flying start at the top of the order. PM's XI captain Tim Paine -- touted by some pundits as a future Australia captain -- had won the toss and chose to bat. But a rain squall delayed the start of play in Canberra.

When play did get underway, the umpires reduced the overs to 44 for each team. Paine and new Test number three Usman Khawaja got the home side away to a steady start, seeing off opening bowlers Chris Woakes and Ajmal Shahzad with little trouble. However the onset of spin spelled the end for Khawaja, who hit a simple return catch off an inside edge to James Tredwell on 22. Paine (50) was next to go, trapped leg before by Tredwell's spin partner Michael Yardy, who removed promising all-rounder Alex Keath (15) in the same fashion. Callum Ferguson and Daniel Christian then came together and scored briskly before Shahzad was brought back into the attack and bowled Ferguson for 39. Tom Thornton (5) and Sam Miller (7) added little resistance until Shahzad had Christian caught by Kevin Pietersen for 53. Some late hitting by veteran fast bowler Brett Lee allowed the PM's XI to post a competitive total of 254. Yardy was the pick of the bowlers, taking 3-33 from his nine overs, while Shahzad claimed 3-61 and Woakes 2-63. Bell and Davies came out blazing,

scoring at more than eight runs an over until Davies miscued a drive and was caught by Ferguson at mid-on from the bowling of discarded Test spinner Xavier Doherty. That brought fellow Sydney Ashes centurion Trott to the crease and he provided solid support to Bell, who continued to treat the bowling with contempt. Another rain delay saw the overs decreased to 35 and the target to 223 under the Duckworth-Lewis method. But the English batsmen were undaunted, Bell and Trott adding 98 runs before Doherty had Trott caught behind off a fine edge. Pietersen made a breezy 13 until he was trapped lbw by Lee, but Bell saw the tourists home, smashing Christian over mid-off for his 13th boundary to secure the win. SCORES IN BRIEF PRIME MINISTER'S XI: 254 for 9 (Paine 50, Khawaja 22, Ferguson 39, Christian 53, Lee 26 not out, Doherty 14; Woakes 2-63, Shahzad 3-61, Yardy 3-33) ENGLAND: 225 for 3 (Bell 124 not out, Davies 24, Trott 48, Pietersen 13; Doherty 2-38) Result: England won by seven wickets (D/L method) Man-of-the-match: Ian Bell

Tahir in SA WC squad

AP, Johannesburg

Imran Tahir's hopes of playing for South Africa at the cricket World Cup were boosted on Monday when the Pakistan-born leg-spinner was added to a provisional squad for next month's tournament. Cricket South Africa said the 31-year-old Tahir, a former Pakistan A international, has replaced batsman Jonathan Vandiar in their 30-man preliminary squad for the February 19-April 2 event in India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh -- where spin bowling on slow, turning wickets is likely to be crucial to teams' hopes. CSA said Vandiar had withdrawn 'gracefully' from the 30-man squad to allow Tahir, an impressive performer in South African domestic cricket this season, to take his place. "We feel that we need to widen our bowling options," said CSA selection convenor Andrew Hudson. "I have discussed the matter with Jonathan and I would like to express my gratitude to him."

Ponting welcomes Ashes review

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Ricky Ponting on Monday welcomed an upcoming review of Australian cricket following his side's Ashes drubbing, saying the whole structure of the game needed to be examined. Cricket Australia chief executive James Sutherland said on Friday that the game would undergo a thorough review of all facets following the humiliating 3-1 Test series loss to fierce rivals England. Writing in The Australian newspaper, Ponting said any review needed to go beyond Test cricket and study all levels of the game. "There is a review after every season, of which I'm always a big part," Ponting wrote. "I understand there will be a lot more involved in the review this time around and rightly so. It's going to be a lot more in-depth than I've ever been involved in and probably as big as those conducted when Australia was really struggling in the mid-80s." The beleaguered skipper, who had a miserable series with the bat, said despite Australia's much-lauded domestic Sheffield Shield competition, the country was not producing enough Test-quality players.

"The performance of the elite team over the past few weeks has been very disappointing," he wrote. "But I think it's important we look a fair bit deeper into Australian cricket than just the last couple of weeks. It's going to be really interesting to see what the review brings up. I think the whole structure of Australian cricket needs looking at." Ponting said state cricket would have to come under the microscope, adding he was not sure it was as strong as it needed to be, and said club cricket and junior cricket also needed to be looked at. "There are a lot of things we can look at, but right at the moment it appears as though we're not producing enough high-quality Test cricketers," he wrote. Ponting conceded Australia, who have slipped to fifth in the Test rankings after many years at the top, had been outplayed by a rampant England. "All of England's players stuck to their plans and executed them well," he wrote. "They have been well rewarded for that. When we were batting or bowling we were not disciplined enough or skilled enough in the moments that really mattered. That's the difference between the teams at the moment."

'KKR to find a role for Ganguly'

PTI, Durban

Kolkata Knight Riders' owner and Bollywood icon Shah Rukh Khan said on Monday he would try and find a role for Sourav Ganguly in his IPL team after the former India skipper remained unsold. Ganguly, who led KKR in the last edition, was left red-faced as none of the 10 franchisees showed interest in buying him at the two-day auction in Bangalore. "I would love it, I would love Sourav to be an integral part. You don't have a team in Kolkata without him. So, I will speak to Dada when I get back," Shah Rukh said. The fans of Ganguly on Sunday burnt Khan's effigies in Kolkata protesting his exclusion from the team. Shah Rukh refused to speak on why other teams ignored the former India captain. "I don't think I should be commenting on the nine other people. There are 350 to 400 players."

Wright urges patience

Cricket

CRICINFO

John Wright, the New Zealand coach, has called his team's performance in the Hamilton Test as 'unacceptable' but has urged 'patience' from fans following the crushing three-day defeat. New Zealand lost all ten second-innings wickets in a session to be shut out of the game that, until tea on the third day, had been closely fought. The Test was Wright's first major assignment in his new role as coach, after he replaced Mark Greatbatch following New Zealand's forgettable one-day campaigns in the subcontinent. "I'm a little bit older and wiser," Wright, who was formerly India's coach, told Radio Sport. "It's certainly been an interesting experience. You've got to have a look at things and I suppose in reality you're looking at the challenge which lies ahead of you. Everybody understands pretty clearly that the performance was unacceptable."

New Zealand's ten-wicket humbling came on a pitch that was favourable for batting. The key, Wright said, was to find batsmen capable of occupying the crease for extended periods of time. "It's going to take some time and we need to find batsmen that are prepared to be very patient and really want to stay at the crease. The talent's there but we've got a bit of teaching to do. New Zealand sports fans do have high expectations, I understand that, and I can say to the public from all of us it was totally unacceptable and we've got to do a lot better. But show us some patience. If I can do my job properly and the boys respond, we'll get there." Wright backed New Zealand to turn the tables in Wellington, the venue for the next Test, but praised Pakistan for their win which was achieved despite the absence of several first-choice players for various reasons. "They're very rich in playing talent and they've always, over the course of their history, managed to field a good team. They've got great fast-bowling stocks and they're a good team, but they're beatable."

ZIMBABWE NAME PRELIMINARY SQUAD

Masakadza left out

CRICINFO



While there is yet to be any official word from Zimbabwe Cricket, it would appear that there might be a few surprises in Zimbabwe's squad for the World Cup. Opening batsman Hamilton Masakadza has paid a heavy price for his poor form in 2010 and is apparently not included in a preliminary 20-man squad, while Sean Ervine may well be in line for an international comeback after his name was included in press reports about the potential team. Masakadza, 27, is one of the country's most experienced batsmen and has been a dominant force in domestic cricket for the last few years. After a prolific run in 2009, when he scored 1,087 runs in ODIs -- the fourth best returns in world cricket that year -- Masakadza's form slumped alarmingly in 2010 and he averaged just 19.00 in ODIs for the national side. After making his debut as a 17-year-old in 2001, Masakadza missed out on selection for the tournament in both 2003 and 2007 -- the first time because he was at university in South Africa and the second because of a dip in form and a perceived lack of fluency in limited-overs cricket. He struggled in Zimbabwe's three most recent series, against Ireland, South Africa and Bangladesh, managing just 52 runs in seven innings. Uncertainty still reigns over Ervine's inclusion. His younger brother, Craig, is a certainty after a productive first year with the national side, but the older Ervine is still under contract with Hampshire as a local player until the end of the 2011 season. He would have to revert to overseas status if he wanted to resume his international career with Zimbabwe, but Hampshire already have legspinner Imran Tahir on their books in that role.

"I'll speak with Sean and get to the bottom of this but I expect him to be with us next year," Hampshire manager Giles White told BBC Solent in December. "We've offered him a new deal and he's said he'd like to take that up. I will be interested to find out more about it because he is under contract with Hampshire. I will try to contact Sean but it's difficult as he's on a farm in Zimbabwe, but we will get him on the phone and sort things out so we can move things forward and hopefully get some clarity." Ervine played the last of 42 ODIs for Zimbabwe against Bangladesh at Harare Sports Club in March 2004 before becoming embroiled in the 'rebel' crisis and falling out with the board. He has since forged a successful career in County cricket with Hampshire, and remains part of their squad for the Caribbean Twenty20 tournament, which started on Monday. Zimbabwe's poor batting was the biggest let-down of their recent Bangladesh tour, and Ervine's form and experience would certainly be a valuable asset to the national side. Zimbabwe's batsmen will also be undergoing an intensive training programme ahead of the World Cup, with enhanced solidity at the beginning of the innings and an ability to play spin in the middle overs being the main objectives. Zimbabwe open their World Cup campaign against Australia in Ahmedabad on February 21 before they face Canada in Nagpur on February 28. SQUAD Elton Chigumbura (captain), Regis Chakabva, Chamu Chibhabha, Charles Coventry, Graeme Cremer, Terry Duffin, Craig Ervine, Sean Ervine, Greg Lamb, Tino Mawoyo, Shingirai Masakadza, Chris Mpofu, Tinashe Panyangara, Ray Price, Ed Rainsford, Vusi Sibanda, Tatenda Taibu, Brendan Taylor, Prosper Utseya, Sean Williams.

Win and draw

FROM PAGE 16 of Serbian coach Zoran Kraljevic. Sheikh Jamal without a coach played out a goalless draw against holders Abahani and then beat Muktiyoddha Sangsad 2-0 before playing to a 1-1 draw against Chittagong Abahani. Helal also blamed the poor refereeing for their draw and also claimed that the ground is smaller than the standard football pitch.

Someone took

FROM PAGE 16 to Canada. We were all very disappointed. We also lost to Kenya and though we were on level terms, we should have won that game too. DSS: How different was the atmosphere in the two tournaments? KM: The 1999 one was successful but as you know, 2003 wasn't good at all. Although I was the highest scorer in that team, it was a bad tour. Our batting, especially that of the top-order, failed. We didn't give our 100 per cent. DSS: Tell us your favourite World Cup memory. KM: It has to be the win against Pakistan. They were the No 1 team and the fun we had after the game, it was so amazing. You know, someone snatched away my keeping gloves when I ran out Saqlain Mushtaq in the end. People were pulling me from different directions, and in that melee I lost my gloves!

Joey Carew no more

AFP, St John's Former West Indies batsman and chairman of selectors Joey Carew died on Saturday at the age of 73, the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) announced in a statement. Carew played 19 Tests for the West Indies and was the WICB's longest serving selector having served three stints starting in the 1970s. Carew opened the batting for the West Indies and made one Test century, against New Zealand at Eden Park in Auckland in 1969.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 Quarrel 5 At the home of 9 — Beta Kappa 12 Mark's replacement 13 Take on 14 Snitch 15 High school VIP 17 Anger 18 Dire 19 Jeans material 21 "People" counterpart 22 Handed out hands 24 Benedict, e.g. 27 Started 28 Ruler's length 31 Atmosphere 32 "Hail, Caesar!" 33 Coffee shop item 34 Post-diet 36 Hr. fraction 37 10 on a dele 38 Of birth 40 Word symbolized by an asperand 41 Vanzetti's co-defendant 43 Musical set in the 1950s 47 Have bills 48 Spring on the Seine 51 — Moines 52 Emanation 53 Rich soil 54 Commercials 55 Piquancy 56 Trig function DOWN 1 Calendar abbr. 2 Kitten's sound 3 Met melody 4 Language 5 Stylish 6 With it 7 Historic time 8 F. Scott Fitzgerald's wife 9 Transfer from computer to paper 10 Mata — 11 Two-some, in a gossip column 16 Opposite of "trans-" 20 Sprite 22 Mephistopheles 23 Paradise 24 Faux — 25 Lubricant 26 Cinderella, ultimately 27 Tibetan monk 29 Tramcar load 30 Stick with a kick 35 Singer Davis 37 Fills with determination 39 November stone 40 Illustrations 41 Pop 42 Dumb-struck 43 Summer-time pest 44 Mine, in Marseille 45 Bridge 46 Slinger girl 49 Actress Sara 50 Apr. addressee

Grid for crossword puzzle with numbers 1-56 indicating starting positions for words.

CRYPTOQUIP

DHQLX H GFIX AYX XIHANPHFB FIMSDAGXQA SQAYHQOHQJBR, GHJYA RNS LFBB AYFA F OQXX - MXPO PXIFLANQ? Yesterday's Cryptquip: WHEN SOMEBODY SWIPES OTHER PEOPLE'S HANDBAGS, I ASSUME THEY WILL GET DIS-PURSED. Today's Cryptquip Clue: R equals Y

BCB decision

FROM PAGE 16 protested against it. We don't have any say but what I believe is that we have to give priority to national interest," said Shaheen.