

Morgan misses WC

AFP, London

England batsman Eoin Morgan has been ruled out of the World Cup after a broken finger, coach Andy Flower told a news conference here on Tuesday.

Left-hander Morgan's place in England's 15-man World Cup squad will be taken by Essex all-rounder Ravi Bopara.

Former Ireland international Morgan missed England's final one-day international (ODI) against Australia in Perth on Sunday with the injury, a fractured middle finger of his left hand, which he suffered in the fourth ODI in Adelaide last month.

"Eoin Morgan won't be going to the World Cup," Flower said. "He needs to be operated on. That's a serious loss."

"But Ravi Bopara, who is an exciting young cricketer in his own right, will be joining us."

Although he endured a tough tour of Australia, failing to break into the Test side and then struggling for form in the ODIs, which the tourists lost 6-1, Morgan's innovative middle-order batting was considered crucial to England's World Cup hopes.

The 24-year-old has played 61 ODIs, scoring 1,094 runs at an average of 38.08, and at an impressive strike-rate of 81.19, including four centuries.

Spaniards scoop Laureus

AFP, Abu Dhabi

Spain had double reason to celebrate at the prestigious Laureus awards here on Monday as world tennis number one Rafael Nadal was voted sportsman of the year and the Spanish football team's World Cup win netted them the team of the year.

American ski superstar Lindsey Vonn got a gentle boost ahead of this week's world alpine skiing championships by winning the sportswoman of the year title.

German golfer Martin Kaymer's fabulous year, which included his first major - the US PGA Championship, saw him win the World Breakthrough of the Year Award.

Vonn earned her award after a stunning year in which she secured her third straight skiing World Cup and the Olympic downhill gold medal.

The World Comeback of the Year Award went to Italy's seven-time motorcycle world champion Valentino Rossi, who returned to the track just 41 days after breaking his leg.

American surfer Kelly Slater, who has won a record ten World Surfing Championships, received the Laureus World Action Sportsperson of the Year award for the third time.

Potter

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Shane Watson and Virat Kohli selected Andre Agassi's 'Open', and our own Tamim Iqbal listed 'Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone', as his favourite.

"I was actually imagining myself as Harry Potter. That's the power of the writer. I thought I could do anything. It was such an engaging tale that I was reading it day and night, at every break," said Tamim about his experience of reading the book.



PHOTO: AFP
Tennis world No.1 Spaniard Rafael Nadal takes a trademark bite out of the trophy upon being named the World Sportsman of the Year at the Laureus World Sports Awards in Abu Dhabi yesterday.

Weight of expectation on Tendulkar

REUTERS, London

Sachin Tendulkar, possessor of every one-day batting record worth holding, carries an unparalleled weight of expectation over the course of the next two months.

Even the incomparable Australian Don Bradman, whose feats at the crease during the Great Depression sustained an emerging nation's morale, did not endure the pressure Tendulkar will confront at the 10th World Cup opening in Dhaka on February 19.

According to the historian Ramachandra Guha, Tendulkar is the best-known Indian alive with a status equivalent to a Hindu god or a Bollywood film star. When he faced the former Pakistan opening bowler Wasim Akram the television audience in India exceeded the entire population of Europe.

"Batsmen walk out into the middle alone," wrote the Indian poet and critic CP

Surendran. "Not Tendulkar. Every time Tendulkar walks to the crease, a whole nation, tatters and all, marches with him to the battle arena."

"A pauper people pleading for relief, remission from the lifelong anxiety of being Indian, by joining in spirit their visored saviour."

Tendulkar scored his 51st Test century this year after a duel with South African fast bowler Dale Steyn recalling Bradman's jousts with England's Harold Larwood in the 1932-33 Bodyline series.

Three more one-day hundreds in the World Cup climaxing in his native Mumbai on April 2 would make him the only batsman to total 100 centuries over both forms of the game, a landmark which like Bradman's Test average of 99.94 would probably last forever.

"I still want to achieve something and everyone knows that," Tendulkar, 37, said last month at a ceremony to celebrate India's number one spot in the world Test rankings.

Call for fresh start

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan coach Waqar Younis and team manager Intikhab Alam called

Tuesday for a fresh start for the national side after three key players were handed lengthy bans on corruption charges.

Riding high after winning the Test and one-day series in New Zealand, the Pakistan team flew home to Karachi and Lahore three days after an International Cricket Council (ICC) tribunal sanctioned the trio.

Salman Butt was banned for 10 years, Mohammad Asif and Mohammad Aamer for seven and five years respectively, after allegations surfaced during last year's tour of England that

they were willing to deliberately bowl no-balls. "It is important that it's finished now and we can start afresh," Waqar told reporters at Lahore airport.

"We can now make a fresh start after a lot of controversies affected Pakistan cricket and I am happy that it's over now."

Waqar was coach during England tour where the scandal erupted and gave testimony to the ICC tribunal in Qatar by teleconference, but said the bans did not affect the successful New Zealand tour.

"The players didn't talk about it at any time, so there was no way it could affect the team's performances on the tour," said Waqar, who welcomed the 3-2 one-day series win in New Zealand.

Eden likely to host three games

AFP, New Delhi

Kolkata is likely to host its remaining three World Cup matches after being stripped of the high-profile game between India and England due to unfinished renovation work, a top official said Tuesday.

"We are pleased with the progress made since January 25 and if that pace of work is maintained, we believe that the stadium will be ready for the games scheduled in March," International Cricket Council (ICC) chief executive Haroon Lorgat said in a statement.

A three-person ICC inspection team, which visited the ground on Monday, reported that outstanding work can be completed in time to host the three matches, the statement added.

Four matches were to be played at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata, but doubts over the fate of the last three games arose after the February 27 match between India and England was shifted to Bangalore.

The venue is now scheduled to host South Africa v Ireland on March 15, Ireland v the Netherlands on March 18 and Zimbabwe v Kenya on March 20.

We're capable

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been on the fringes of the one-day outfit. He has played only 51 one-dayers in more than five years since his debut in 2005, and has a bloated career economy rate of 6.01. But he proved effective in the two ODIs he's played over the past 12 months, bagging seven wickets for 77 runs.

The other fast bowlers in the Indian squad are Zaheer Khan, Ashish Nehra and Munaf Patel.

Tensions flare

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why I can't concentrate on Mashrafe, Rajib, Syed Rasel or Alok Kapali. I'd love him [Mashrafe] to be in the squad, a fit Mashrafe is our number one quick bowler," said Siddons.

Siddons also said it was not important for him to watch Mashrafe's progress in the Abahani-Mohammedan encounter on February 5 at the Fatullah Stadium where the fast bowler got through ten overs unscathed. "It was part of his rehab. No one needed to be there. The physio was here treating the players. He [Mashrafe] got through the game, it was what we were after," he said.

"We knew he'd be really good by this time. Maybe we made a mistake but everyone can debate that. He'll need an operation at the end of the tournament.

He's still upset but that's fine," said Siddons.

SA Games audit still pending

SPORTS REPORTER

One year since the 2010 South Asian Games and the Bangladesh Olympic Association is still seemingly in dark about its audit report on the Gmes.

The sports-friendly government extended its all-out support by providing over Tk 156 crore including the expenditure of constructions of new venues like Wooden Floor Stadium, Boxing Stadium and Handball Stadium ahead of the grand event.

"I am not up-to-date with the latest developments of the audit report of SA Games because I was not in the country in the last few days," claimed BOA chief executive officer Col (ret) Waliullah yesterday.

However, BOA treasurer Sanaul Haq Bakul informed that the audit was still a work-in-progress and a couple of sub-committees of the SA Games have yet to submit their expenditure report.

"At the moment, I can't assure you when we will be able to submit our audit report to the National Sports Council as three committees out of 16 have not prepared their respective reports yet," said Bukul, adding that they were supposed to submit the audit report to the NSC by March last year.

The BOA is supposed to submit audit report on Tk 106 crore of which the government provided Tk 49 crore to host the games and Tk 19 crore to conduct training round the year while the BOA collected Tk 49 from sponsors.

However, Bakul, who is also member secretary of SA Games finance and budget committee, said that they were going to reimburse Tk 9 crore.

Golam Rahman Miah, NSC director (finance) said that they have repeatedly asked the BOA for the reports but failed to get any positive response.

Sreesanth

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As a batsman he has an excellent technique to cope with any conditions and match situation and as a wicketkeeper he has also improved a lot. I hardly find a positive player like Mushfiqur," said Mashud.

"He is a hard-working and disciplined guy and I have high hopes with Mushfiqur. I think we are yet to get the best out of this young man. He has some lacking in his keeping which in my opinion is because of his lack of experience of playing four-day matches. Actually you have to give someone enough time to become a complete wicketkeeper," he added.

Mashud also believes that Mushfiqur Rahim would be a very vital component in Tigers' success in the upcoming World Cup.

Hauritz, Hussey out

AFP, Sydney



Australia dropped injured duo Nathan Hauritz and Mike Hussey from their World Cup squad on Monday, calling up Callum Ferguson and Jason Krejza to replace them at this month's show-piece one-day tournament.

Hussey and Hauritz were both in doubt after undergoing surgery on injuries and chief selector Andrew Hilditch said officials had decided to replace them and take a fully-fit squad to the World Cup which starts on February 19.

"Based on the medical advice an application is being made to the ICC to replace both players in the World Cup squad," Hilditch said in a statement.

"(Selectors have) determined that the best strategy to ensure a successful campaign is for Australia to enter the tournament with a fully fit squad of fifteen from the first game."

Veteran batsman Hussey, felled with a hamstring tendon injury, has been replaced by the 26-year-old Ferguson, who was recently called up for the final two matches of Australia's one-day series against England.

"Callum has an excellent record in one-day international cricket and played well in the one-day game against England in Sydney recently," said Hilditch.

"We think he'll play well in sub-continental conditions."

The right-hander, who averages 44.00 from 28 ODIs, has bounced back from a devastating knee injury sustained in the 2009 ICC Champions Trophy final against New Zealand.

He was chosen for the World Cup after Shaun Marsh, the selectors' preference to replace Hussey, was also hit with a hamstring strain.

Despite only making his ODI debut last Sunday, Jason Krejza, 28, will step in for Hauritz, who dislocated his shoulder in the first ODI clash with England.

Krejza took 12 wickets on his 2008 Test debut and picked up 2 for 53 at the weekend after being called up for Xavier Doherty, who was first in line to replace Hauritz until he suffered a back injury.

"Jason toured India with the Australian Test team in 2008 and understands those conditions. We're certain he'll be a key member of our squad," said Hilditch of the aggressive off-spinner.

Team physiotherapist Alex Kountouris gave captain Ricky Ponting the all-clear to depart for India, saying his finger -- fractured during the Ashes -- was healing well.

"He is batting regularly and is expected to transition into unrestricted training soon after the team arrives in India," said Kountouris.

Steve Smith was making "very good progress" from a groin injury incurred during the sixth ODI against England, while Brad Haddin was expected to recover soon from a blow to the knee, he added.

We're ready to roll: Afridi

PTI, Karachi



Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi has said that every player of his side contributed in their series-win in New Zealand and it gives him confidence of doing well in the forthcoming World Cup.

Pakistan won a one-day series first time since 2008 after beating the Kiwis 3-2.

"What has given us confidence that we can do well in the World Cup is that nearly every player contributed towards our series win in New Zealand."

"You can never expect to win dependent on one or two players. Every player has to contribute in some way in a match," Afridi told media at the Karachi airport on Monday night after returning from New Zealand.

"We were doing well in patches in recent matches but were not able to win series but this time we managed to do that with proper combined performances. And don't forget New Zealand has been a very difficult side to beat at home in the past," he added.

Afridi said he was happy with the World Cup combination given to him and was confident of lifting the trophy.

"We just need to continue doing our basics right and everyone pitching in throughout the competition. And with the nation praying for us we are now among the favorites this World Cup," he said.

The Pakistan skipper also made it clear that while the team could not ignore the recent happenings off the field but they are trying to focus just on cricket.

"The team has become mentally tougher and is hungry for success."

The Pakistan squad is due to leave for Bangladesh on the night of February 10 and will attend a reception, hosted in their honour by the Prime Minister in Islamabad a day before.

Afridi also pointed out that his players were also looking forward to the World Cup because the pitches in India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh would be very familiar.

"The pitches are going to be an advantage for the Asian teams including us so we are prepared," he said.

The secret behind

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to be a good wicketkeeper. I strongly believe his improvement as a wicketkeeper will be visible during the World Cup," said Nasir.

"But still he has to improve his gripping and movement and I hope he will be improving with each game," he added.

Mushfiqur's predecessor Mashud also heaped praise on the young man.

"He is a perfect one-day player and an asset for any team. As a batsman he has an excellent technique to cope with any conditions and match situation and as a wicketkeeper he has also improved a lot. I hardly find a positive player like Mushfiqur," said Mashud.

"He is a hard-working and disciplined guy and I have high hopes with Mushfiqur. I think we are yet to get the best out of this young man. He has some lacking in his keeping which in my opinion is because of his lack of experience of playing four-day matches. Actually you have to give someone enough time to become a complete wicketkeeper," he added.

Mashud also believes that Mushfiqur Rahim would be a very vital component in Tigers' success in the upcoming World Cup.

Tigers' jerseys

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The winner Emran expressed the occasion as a dream come true for him.

Grameen knitwear then manufactured the jerseys at their plant in Savar EPZ.

Syed Tahmeed Azizul Haq, Grameenphone's head of market communications handed over the jerseys to Tanjeeb Ahsan Saad, team operations manager of the Bangladesh national cricket team while Enayet Hussain Siraj, director & chairman, cricket operations; Jalal Yunus, director & chairman media committee; Mizanur Rahman, director & chairman, logistics committee, Bangladesh Cricket Board were also present.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
- 1 Source of PIN money?
 - 4 Colorful fish
 - 8 Water-craft
 - 12 Weep
 - 13 Assess
 - 14 Therefore
 - 15 Trouble
 - 17 Halt
 - 18 Moral principles
 - 19 That girl
 - 21 Thickness
 - 22 Frank
 - 26 Binge
 - 29 A handful
 - 30 Greek vowel
 - 31 Be in charge of
 - 32 Path
 - 33 Cripple
 - 34 Cleo's slayer
 - 35 Carton
 - 36 Nervous
 - 37 Empty talk
 - 39 Young fellow
 - 40 "Help!"
 - 41 Porthos' pal
 - 45 Plumbing problem
 - 48 Portable cooker
 - 50 Servitude symbol
 - 51 Busy with
 - 52 Performance
 - 53 Paradise
 - 54 Hammer part
 - 55 "Quiet!"
 - DOWN**
 - 1 Rue the run
 - 2 Run
 - 3 Legend
 - 4 Authoritative decider
 - 5 Easy mark
 - 6 Consumed
 - 7 Pennsylvania city
 - 8 Harass
 - 9 Scrap
 - 10 Past
 - 11 Upper limit
 - 16 Used a paper towel
 - 20 Explanation
 - 23 College VIP
 - 24 Elevator name
 - 25 Ready for anything
 - 26 Persian bigwig
 - 27 Mexican money
 - 28 Engrossed
 - 29 Transmit wire
 - 32 Put on a pedestal
 - 33 Olympics award
 - 35 Resume
 - 36 Sport fish
 - 38 Colorado ski mecca
 - 39 Starbucks order
 - 42 "Serpico" author
 - 43 Desire
 - 44 Brother of Cain and Abel
 - 45 Coloring agent
 - 46 Scepter
 - 47 Eisenhower
 - 49 Indivisible

Solution time: 25 mins.



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CRYPTOQUIP

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X F D X B M B Y T K X U L F I M T A Y I I K
D A H Y V A M E A T F - M A H Q B Y I .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: BECAUSE THAT FARMER HAILS FROM BEIRUT, I SUPPOSE HE COULD BE CALLED A SEEDER OF LEBANON.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Y equals A