

## Bell hits his stride

AFP, London

England's Ian Bell ended his near nine-month wait for a first-class century with an unbeaten hundred for Warwickshire on the second day of their rain-affected County Championship match against Durham on Thursday.

Bell, 59 not out overnight, got to three figures during the 22 overs that were possible in this First Division clash at Edgbaston and finished the day on 106 not out.

His innings was the cornerstone of Warwickshire's 195 for seven, a 32-run lead over visitors Durham.

It was the 39th first-class century of Bell's career and his 19th for Warwickshire, but his first in 20 innings since he made his Test-best 235 against India at The Oval last August.

Bell struggled with spin in the Tests against Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and his first three innings for his county this season produced only 34 runs, so this was a particularly timely knock in what will be his final Championship match before the start of England's Test series against the West Indies in a fortnight.

Veteran New Zealand seamer Andre Adams outshone the England stars on show at Old Trafford as he took seven for 32 as Nottinghamshire dismissed county champions Lancashire for 146.

## Chronicles

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highest mould, one for whom football often takes a position ahead of family or friends, a constant innovator, for whom philosophy is important above all. In that way, Barcelona and Guardiola are a match made in heaven. The club is in his DNA and vice-versa and no one, not even Messi or Xavi or Iniesta embodies the club spirit as well as Guardiola does.

And while that is perhaps what made him so successful, it is also why Guardiola had to give up the post. To paraphrase a popular movie quote 'his glory went hand in hand with his doom.'

So while Pep sails off to a sunset that even he knew was coming we should not aim to poke holes in his legacy or slight his achievements but celebrate the beautiful football he has provided us over the last few years. Whether it be Xavi's passing, Iniesta's vision, the metronomic tendencies of Sergio Busquets, the darting moves of David Villa or the overall brilliance of Lionel Messi, Guardiola had a hand in it all. And just for that and that alone, he deserves a spot in the pantheon of greats.

## BFF's apathy

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U-22 side in the last executive committee meeting last month," said Nipu.

However, he said that the selection committee comprising six coaches, has picked 50 players from U-19, First Division League, second-tier professional league and the Bangladesh Premier League and are planning to immediately arrange a three-day trial to truncate the squad to 30 members.

Players like goalkeepers Shohidul Alam Sohel, Raghu, defenders Yeasin, Raihan, Yeamin Munna, midfielders Anik, Shahed, Habibur Rahman Shohag, Sohel Rana, Jamal Hossain, Shariful Islam, strikers Sohel Rana, Wahed Ahmed and Abdul Malek are the mentionable ones in the 50-member squad.

Most of the players picked for the initial squad are sitting idle in the professional league and hardly get places in the starting eleven for their respective clubs. The training could have easily been arranged with those players much before but there was no such attempt from BFF.



Chennai Super Kings captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni plays a cut shot during their IPL Twenty20 against Deccan Chargers at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

## Kings top Chargers

SPORTS DESK

The Chennai Super Kings came out on top against Deccan Chargers by 10 runs in their IPL clash at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai yesterday.

Batting first, the Super Kings put up a respectable 160 run total on the board using their full complement of 20 overs. Opener Faf du Plessis was the highest scorer with 42, an innings made unique by the fact that he hit only two boundaries and a six in a 35 ball knock.

Du Plessis was ably supported in his quest by the Indian duo of Suresh Raina and Mahendra Singh Dhoni who scored 32 and 34 respectively but fell trying to take the initiative in an innings that never really took

off. Veer Pratap Singh was the chief wicket taker with 2 for Deccan but he also gave away 35 runs in an expensive 3 over spell.

In reply, the Chargers started sedately and managed to keep wickets in hand despite the early loss of Parthiv Patel. But when push came to shove both Shikhar Dhawan and Cameron White managed to find the big hits hard to come by as the Chargers found themselves behind the run-rate. Despite some lusty late hitting by the latter, supported by Daniel Christian, the Chargers fell behind.

Albie Morkel, Ben Hilfenhaus and Raina picked up a wicket each for the Kings.

### BRIEF SCORES

**CHENNAI SUPER KINGS:** 160 for 6 in 20 overs (Du Plessis 42, Dhoni 34; Singh 3-35)  
**DECCAN CHARGERS:** 150 for 5 in 20 overs (White 77, Christian 28)

## The world waits for WI

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than a year.

It does appear though that he will be available, after completing his IPL duties, for the one-day matches against England that follow the Tests.

Against this backdrop the tourists, recently beaten 2-0 in a home Test series by Australia, have arrived in cold, wet England, where the seam-bowler friendly conditions could suit the likes of West Indies quick Kemar Roach.

"I am quite confident our guys can put the English batsmen under pressure," said West Indies captain Darren Sammy ahead of the tour opener against Sussex at Hove, which starts on Saturday.

But do the West Indies have the batsmen to counter the conditions in which they expect their bowlers to thrive?

Certainly, in the experienced left-hander Shivnarine Chanderpaul, now officially ranked the world's best batsmen, they have a cricketer for whom the adjective 'gritty' was invented. Here is a man so experienced in salvage missions it is little wonder he hasn't been asked to raise the Titanic.

Chanderpaul however is a middle-order batsman and even he can only do so much if

those above him fall cheaply.

To his credit Sammy, whose team showed glimpses of their potential against Australia, didn't duck the issue.

"Stats don't lie and it is fair to say our top order has looked vulnerable," he said. "It did not click against Australia, but the selectors still have shown faith in Adrian Barath and Kieran Powell.

"They are quite young, they are still learning on the job."

Sammy has won plaudits for his leadership skills but doubts remain over whether he is worth his place in the side.

After 24 Tests, the 28-year-old has just two fifties to his name and he averages nearly 31 with the ball.

"I have developed a formula for myself in which I could play and I worked out that once I play my way, the aggressive way, I get more results," said Sammy.

"As a team, the culture and the environment is very good, and the players are starting to shape up as a family."

For all those for whom the West Indies will always be their 'second favourite' side, they will hope Sammy is right about his own game and that of his team.

## Law urges more cricket

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Haq get into the team. He's scored runs in the A team tours. We've been discussing him at length in selection meetings. He looked like a quality young player," added Law.

He said he wanted those in the current side and these youngsters to help out the duo who do it regularly, Shakib Al Hasan and Tamim Iqbal.

"You look for the standout players and those two have been carrying Bangladesh for a while. I told the rest of the team that it is not about two players. It's about other people sticking their hand up and doing well.

"It takes the pressure off those two as well, especially Shakib who plays a part in every game with his batting, bowling and fielding," he said.

Law also sounded off a warning to the world's No 1 all-rounder, telling him to take care of himself off the field.

"He [Shakib] is a professional on the field but off the field he's different. I don't mean this

in a bad way, but he could be fitter. He's admitted that he can work a bit harder on those aspects. When he gets out in the cricket field, he creates something out of nothing. He's a beautiful player to watch when he's going great with the bat," he said.

Law also gave a brief picture of his first few months in charge.

"It takes a while to understand where everyone is coming from. It pleased me that after five months they stopped saying 'Jamie did this, Jamie did this'."

"I have played against Jamie [Siddons] a lot, we are two totally different characters. My work was not about how far or how hard you can hit the ball, it was about the basics. If you hit the ball in the gap, it goes to the boundary," he said.

Law also informed that his coaching at the BPL, where was in charge of the Sylhet Royals, would depend on his new employers, Cricket Australia.

## Hussey toils in Indian heat

AFP, New Delhi

Veteran Australian batsman Michael Hussey, newly arrived in the Indian Premier League (IPL) to play for the defending champions, admitted Friday that he was struggling with the heat and humidity.

The middle-order batsman, who turns 37 later this month, was run out for 18 in his first match on Monday after arriving to play for Chennai Super Kings (CSK) following a Test series for Australia in the West Indies.

"I do struggle in the heat and humidity. That is a lot. It's very, very tough," Hussey, nicknamed "Mr Cricket", told NDTV in an interview ahead of Friday's match between Chennai and the Deccan Chargers.

Hussey, representing CSK since the IPL's inaugural season in 2008, said it was "fantastic" to be back playing for Chennai.

"It's good to catch up with the other players," Hussey said, adding he loved the hot and spicy food in the industrial southern port city, where the temperature was 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) on Friday.

Hussey conceded it was a big challenge playing against the Kolkata Knight Riders on Monday after a long flight from the Caribbean.

"It was a dream actually. I was not sure what was going on. It was a bit of a battle getting on the field. Quite a big jetlag," said Hussey.

Hussey has scored 5,708 runs in 73 Tests and 5,262 runs in 181 one-dayers since making his international debut in 2004.

## Gayle welcome

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"We all know what he is capable of doing and we hope he could fit in nicely and do the job to take West Indies cricket forward."

Gayle said he realised the gamble he was taking in turning down an agreed deal to play English domestic Twenty20 cricket for Somerset.

"I understand that by making this decision, it may place me in a position of considerable risk, since I am foregoing a signed contract, without any guarantees whatsoever, with only the hope that I will be selected to play for the West Indies again," Gayle said.

"I have now satisfied all of the requests of the WICB and their selection panel, with whom I met via teleconference yesterday (Wednesday), and to whom I reiterated previous assurances given to the board regarding my availability.

"So that there is no doubt, I confirmed to the selectors that I was available for West Indies duty in all forms of cricket, immediately following the conclusion of my contractual obligations to my IPL franchise, Royal Challengers Bangalore."

Gayle has not played for the West Indies since the 2011 World Cup, but has been in blistering form in the IPL, where he has made 81, 87, 4, 86 and 71 in his past five innings.

## Essex eye

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"The reason I had to retract from my initial decision of not playing county is to let myself play matches. After the Asia Cup, we got a long break so I feel rather than taking rest, it is better to play some cricket. Still I'm looking for a gap in the schedule so that I can take a 15-20 days uninterrupted break from the game. Even this sort of a break has become very important for me."

## Cycling Fed

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Khan, AM Mohidul Islam and Barrister Mifrah Zahir, joint-secretaries Farhad Jesmin Lily and Shafiqur Rahman, treasurer Sheikh Sajed Ullah Saju.

## Bolt ready to rumble

Athletics

AFP, Kingston

Sprint king Usain Bolt will run his first individual race of the Olympic season on Saturday when he lines up for the 100m at the Jamaica International Invitational at the national stadium.

After running the anchor leg on the Racers' 4x100m club relay team that clocked a season-leading 37.82 seconds in rainy and cold conditions three weeks ago at the UTech Track and Field Classic in Kingston, Bolt had reported he was injury free and ready to go.

"I felt all right, comfortable, smooth, not as smooth as I would normally feel, but I have a few months to get ready and a lot more running to go, so I look forward to getting better," Bolt said of his early form in a season pointed at the London Olympics starting in July.

Training partner Yohan Blake, who will headline the 200m here this weekend, had run a season-leading 9.90 seconds in the 100m at the UTech meet, but with dry conditions expected on Saturday this will likely be eclipsed by Bolt.

Bolt is set to leave for Europe next week, where he is scheduled to run several events before returning to Jamaica in June for the Olympic Trials.

A number of world and Olympic champions and medallists have been confirmed for Saturday's meeting, an IAAF World Challenge event.

## Del Potro powers to victory

Tennis

AFP, Estoril

Juan Martin del Potro made a strong start to his French Open preparations with a 6-1, 6-0 hammering of Portugal's Rui Machado to reach the quarterfinals of the Estoril Open on Thursday.

Del Potro, the top seed and defending champion, was playing an ATP match on the surface for the first time this season after winning two clay Davis Cup rubbers at home in April when Argentina defeated Croatia.

Despite the scoreline, the 23-year-old admitted that Machado had tested him as he looks to build up his form.

"I played well for only my first match after Davis Cup. The score might not have looked it, but he's dangerous on clay," said Del Potro, who won his last title at Marseille in February, prior to a semi-final in Dubai against Roger Federer.

"But I played much better than him and took all of my break points."

A year ago, Del Potro arrived at the Estadio Nacional ranked 46th and unsure of his game after missing much of 2010 following wrist surgery.

However, the 2009 US Open champion dug deep to claim his first title in the country with a victory over Spaniard Fernando Verdasco.

Now ranked a more respectable 12th, the Argentinian added: "I'm pleased with my performance. This was good for a first match of this part of the season."

Victory over Machado improved Del Potro's 2012 record to 24-6 ahead of his semi-final against two-time champion Albert Montanes on Friday.

Montanes, seeded seventh, advanced to the last eight with a 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 win over American Bobby Reynolds.

Fourth seed Albert Ramos of Spain beat German Bjorn Phau 7-5, 6-0 to reach the quarters, where he will face the last Portuguese in contention, Joao Sousa.

The local player won 3-6, 6-3, 4-2 when Uzbek Denis Istomin quit after a 30-minute evening rain interruption, citing a bad back as his reason for not returning to the court.

In the women's draw, Italian top seed Roberta Vinci reached the semi-finals by defeating Russian seventh seed Nadia Petrova 6-2, 1-6, 6-4.

Word Indoor 60m silver medallist Nesta carter of Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago's Olympic silver medallist Richard Thompson, Commonwealth Games champion Lerone Clarke, World Championships relay gold medallists Dexter Lee and Michael Frater, Darvis Patton and Antiguan Daniel Bailey were expected to chase Bolt in the 100m.

Blake who ran the second fastest 200m ever -- 19.26 seconds last year -- was originally expected to clash with former 100m world record holder Asafa Powell in the half lap race.

But Powell said Wednesday a nagging groin injury had him re-evaluating his plans to start in the 200m.

Norway's Jaysuma Saidy Ndure, Rasheed Dwyer and Nickel Ashmeade are likely challengers in the 200m field.

The female sprints should be competitive with defending Olympic champion Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, 100m world champion Carmelita Jeter, Bianca Knight, joint Olympic silver medallists Kerron Stewart and Sherone Simpson, Debbie Ferguson McKenzie and Kelly-Ann Baptiste all confirmed to race in either the 100m or 200m.

America's Jeter won the 100m last year and has the fastest 200m in the world this year of 22.31 seconds, clocked in California last month.

Sanya Richards Ross will headline the women's 400m, where she will go up against Britain's Christine Ohurugo as well as Jamaicans Novlene Williams Mills, Rose-Marie Whyte and IAAF Diamond League 400m hurdles winner Kaliese Spencer.

## Bangladeshi

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He was sheltered for a time by an immigrant help group and currently lodges with families from his chess club in the Paris suburb of Creteil.

Alam won the junior French Championship last month and would be able to join the national team in tournaments abroad if he had valid travel documents, according to the French Chess Federation.

Federation official Jordi Lopez said that Alam had the right to join the national team because he met the criterion of being enrolled in a French school.

## Asif pleads

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all cricket for five years.

"I was shocked when I was handed that 12-month jail term, and when they termed me guilty I was very surprised because there was no evidence against me," said Asif.

He expressed hope that his lawyer, Ravi Sukul, can overturn the ICC ban.

"I am fitter than before because I was using the gym and although I didn't get to play much cricket, I played badminton and football," said Asif, confident he could still bowl as well as ever.

"You don't tell a fish how to swim, so I have not forgot how to bowl."

Once considered a fast-rising talent, Asif twice failed dope tests, in 2006 and 2008, the second during the inaugural Indian Premier League season which ended in one-year ban.

He was also detained in Dubai for 19 days in June 2008 for possession of a banned drug.



Roberta Vinci of Italy pumps her fist after winning a point against Nadia Petrova of Russia during their match at the Estoril Open in Portugal on Thursday. PHOTO: REUTERS