

Yuvi back from the brink

First India-New Zealand T20I today

 **Cricket**

AFP, Visakhapatnam

Indian all-rounder and World Cup hero Yuvraj Singh will don national colours for the first time since battling cancer when a two-match Twenty20 series against New Zealand starts on Saturday.

The 30-year-old left-hander underwent chemotherapy in the United States in March and April to treat a rare germ-cell tumour between his lungs which was diagnosed late last year.

Yuvraj, who was man of the tournament in India's World Cup triumph last year, has not played competitive cricket since two home Tests against the West Indies last November.

But the selectors recalled him as soon as he was declared fit by doctors at the National Cricket Academy in Bangalore where he had begun light training in July.

"It is hard to believe that I will be playing for India again," Yuvraj said ahead of the first Twenty20 game against the Black Caps in the southern coastal town of Visakhapatnam.

"A few months back I had trouble climbing four steps, now I can't wait to take the field. It is like starting a new life," said the all-rounder.

Veteran spinner Harbhajan Singh, also making a comeback after being out of favour with the selectors for a year, said he was delighted to see close friend Yuvraj back in action.

"Now this is what we call a comeback," said Harbhajan. "There can't be a bigger inspiration in cricket than Yuvi. It is a privilege to be back in the dressing room with him."

The match on Saturday and the second game in Chennai on Tuesday will serve as a

tune-up for the World Twenty20 that starts in Sri Lanka on September 18.

The Black Caps are hoping to end their Indian tour on a high by winning the Twenty20 games after being whitewashed 2-0 in the recent Test series.

All-rounder Jacob Oram, who did not play in the Tests, said the two games were timely ahead of the tournament in Sri Lanka.

"We are here to win but whatever happens we have to make sure we learn from the series because it's great preparation," Oram said.

"You are not going to get a tougher competition than playing India in India. Fifty-over champs but perennial T20 favourites as well."

New Zealand will be boosted by the return of influential all-rounder and former captain Daniel Vettori, who missed the Tests due to a groin injury.

Tickets for the first game at the 27,000-capacity Andhra Cricket Association stadium have been sold out despite forecasts of bad weather on Saturday.

TEAMS

INDIA (from): Mahendra Singh Dhoni (captain), Gautam Gambhir, Virender Sehwag, Suresh Raina, Virat Kohli, Yuvraj Singh, Irfan Pathan, Ravichandran Ashwin, Zaheer Khan, Lakshmiopathy Balaji, Ashok Dinda, Rohit Sharma, Piyush Chawla, Harbhajan Singh, Manoj Tiwary.

NEW ZEALAND (from): Ross Taylor (capt), Martin Guptill, Rob Nicol, Brendon McCullum, Kane Williamson, BJ Watling, James Franklin, Jacob Oram, Nathan McCullum, Daniel Vettori, Kyle Mills, Doug Bracewell, Tim Southee, Ronnie Hira, Adam Milne.

Eng won't miss KP

First T20I against SA today

 **Cricket**

AFP, Chester-le-Street

England Twenty20 captain Stuart Broad has insisted the absence of Kevin Pietersen will not overshadow the upcoming series with South Africa and the defence of their World Twenty20 title in Sri Lanka.

Pietersen remains in international exile as the row over the "provocative texts" he sent to South African players, some allegedly critical of England teammates rumbles on.

The South Africa-born batsman, England's man of the tournament when they won the World Twenty20 in the Caribbean two years ago, did announce his limited overs retirement earlier this season but then changed his mind and made himself available for all formats again.

However, Pietersen's replacement, Alex Hales made 99 from 68 balls against the West Indies in Nottingham during Engand's last Twenty20 match, in Nottingham in June.

England now face South Africa in three Twenty20s, starting at Chester-le-Street, the home of north-east county Durham, on Saturday.

Broad told Sky Sports News on Friday: "The planning started, for these (Twenty20) games and the (Twenty20) World Cup, from Trent Bridge.

"KP (Pietersen) had made himself unavailable for the World Cup and his replacement came in and got the highest score for an English batsman.

"The planning had already been set in place, Alex Hales came in and did very well and that's what we've been focusing on.

"We've got a great squad here and we're really excited about the next month," the all-rounder added. "We've got guys who are hungry and keen to develop their skills, and going to Sri Lanka we're very excited to do that."

Perils await

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Czech power-hitter Berdych, the man who stunned five-time US Open champion Federer, ahead of their semi-final.

Berdych's stunning victory over the world number one condemned the great Swiss to his worst defeat in New York since 2003.

The sixth seed will be making his semi-final debut on Saturday against the British third seed, who was runner-up to Federer in 2008, and will be buoyed by a winning record against the Scot that stands at 4-2.

"Berdych is a great player. Let's show him some respect, too," said Murray after his passage to the last four for the third time was followed almost exclusively about the potential dangers posed by Federer.

That was after Murray had seen off a choking Marin Cilic on Wednesday afternoon but before Berdych ended Federer's proud record of 21 successive wins in night sessions on Arthur Ashe Stadium.



PHOTO: INTERNET
India all-rounder Yuvraj Singh bats in the nets during a practice session in Visakhapatnam yesterday.

Hingis picked for Hall of Fame

REUTERS, New York

Swiss former world number one Martina Hingis, a winner of five Grand Slam singles titles, has been nominated for induction into the International Tennis Hall of Fame.

Hingis, 31, was announced as a nominee on Thursday along with 1991 Wimbledon champion Michael Stich of Germany and Czech Helena Sukova, one of the greatest doubles players of all time.

Other nominees included veteran Thelma Coyne Long of Australia, who won 19 grand slam titles from the 1930s to 1950s, and former players Charlie Pasarell of the United States and Ion Tiriac of Romania who each became successful tennis promoters.

Hingis, who won the Australian Open and Wimbledon at the age of 16, quit tennis for the first time in 2003 at the age of 22, suffering from ankle injuries.

Sub junior chess

SPORTS REPORTER

Four players shared the lead in the Azimuddin Bhuiyan Trust 32nd National Sub Junior Chess Championship at the close of the fourth round at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall room yesterday.

The leaders of the points table are -- Abdullah Al Saif, Ikramul Haque Siam, Fahad Rahman and Saad Md. Junayed -- all of whom secured maximum four points.

Rezaul Alam Raju was in second position with 3.5 points after drawing his board against Akib Jawad.

Who will be

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U-13, U-14 and U-15 squads but Ripon despite not having played at any age-group levels still found himself voted amongst the top players in the competition.

"It might be that they mentioned me but here all the players are good but I am not satisfied with my performance and there is still some room to improve. I have to present myself before the foreign coaches and I am determined to impress them," said a confident Ripon who hails from the Faridpur district.

Like Dhaka Division-2 and Chittagong, there are many names mentioned by their teammates. Winger Emon, defenders Iqbal, Sharif, midfielder Sohel Arman of Sylhet Division, strikers Leon and Morshed, midfielder Jeon, goalkeeper Nirob and midfielder Piyal of Rangpur Division, defenders Biswanath and Kiron, midfielders Kiron, Rabiul, Likhon and striker Ilias from runners-up Dhaka Division-2 and midfielder Mithun and Babu, goalkeeper Zahir, defenders Bibek and Jiblu and striker Sumon from champions Khulna Division are considered to be ahead of others participants to get a final place in the 12-member squad.

However, the final decision will be taken by the three coaches of the Soccer School of Manchester School in the next two days.

"Bennett, McClean and me will take these boys to three practice sessions and we will be looking for quality players," said Kevin while watching the final match at the BNS.

"Once they are in the Manchester United Soccer School, it will be very interesting for them, they will see the training and whole academy system. Soccer School is a great place to visit and learn football," Kevin said. "They will come back home with a fantastic experience and share it with their teammates and it will be a great motivation for them to be a future footballer."

In three practice sessions, the players will be given some skill drills and put into different game situation such as one vs one (attacking), three vs three (defending) in an effort to assess their capability of different skills as well as positional knowledge on the pitch.



PHOTO: AFP
Britain's Jonnie Peacock (L) crosses the finish line on his way to winning the men's 100m T44 sprint final in the Paralympic Games at the London Olympic Stadium on Thursday.

Blade Runner upstaged again

AFP, London



Britain's Jonnie Peacock on Thursday

sprinted to glory in the Paralympics' showpiece final, stripping

"Blade Runner" Oscar

Pistorius of another

title with a lightning-quick 100m.

The 19-year-old, who holds the world record of 10.85sec in the straight sprint, again proved he is the fastest amputee runner in the world by taking gold at the Olympic Stadium in east London in a new Paralympic record of 10.90sec.

Pistorius, 25, was just out of the medals in fourth, clocking 11.17sec behind compatriot, friend and roommate Arnau Fourie, who took bronze in 11.08sec and US sprinter Richard Browne, who won silver in 11.03sec.

A stunned Peacock described his win as "amazing" while the South African star was magnanimous in defeat and said the Briton's performance was just the start of a stellar career.

"I can't imagine how happy he must be to do this in front of his home crowd," he told Britain's Channel 4 television. "Well done, it's a great time for him. He's still young and he's got a great future ahead of him."

Organisers had billed the T44 race for single and double below-the-knee amputees as the race of the Games, predicting that all eight finalists could go under 11sec for the first time.

Peacock, a single leg amputee trained by Dan Pfaff who coached Canada's Donovan Bailey to Olympic

100m glory in 1996, signalled his intent in Thursday's heats by equalling the Paralympic record of 11.08sec.

Pistorius, the T44 100m, 200m and 400m champion in Beijing, had warned that he was not favourite for the straight sprint, as he was a one-lap specialist.

The Games' most high-profile athlete, who became the first double-amputee to run in the Olympics last month, had been keen to let his running do the talking after becoming embroiled in a row over artificial blade length.

After sensationally losing his T44 200m title to Brazil's Alan Oliveira on Sunday, Pistorius said he was at a disadvantage in terms of stride length as his rivals were "a lot taller".

The row about whether his rivals had illegally flouted rules governing the maximum allowed height of prostheses has rumbled on all week, although the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) has said there were no violations.

Pistorius gained a measure of revenge over Oliveira on Thursday, as he anchored South Africa to a world record-breaking victory in the T42-46 4x100m relay for single and double below-the-knee amputees and upper limb amputees.

British wheelchair racer David Weir provided the warm-up for the sprint kings by retaining his T54 800m title after successfully defending his 1,500m crown and winning gold in the 5,000m.

Weir's team-mate Hannah Cockroft doubled up after winning the T34 100m to take the 200m, while France's Assia El Hannouni won the T12 200m title for

blind and visually impaired runners for the third consecutive Games.

Earlier in the day, Britain's Sarah Storey clinched her fourth gold of the Games and the 11th in her career by winning the women's individual C4/5 road race over 64km at the Brands Hatch motor racing circuit in southeast England.

The 34-year-old cyclist has now won 11 golds in her Games career -- a joint record for a British female Paralympian.

Australian swimmer Jacqueline Freney took a national record-breaking seventh gold of the Games in the S7 400m freestyle, after team-mate Matthew Cowdrey bagged his 12th career gold and South Africa's Natalie du Toit got her 13th.

Russia-born US swimmer Jessica Long won the S8 100m freestyle for third Games in a row, beating her own world record, for her fifth gold in the British capital.

In five-a-side football, Brazil were on course to retain their unbeaten Paralympic record since the sport was introduced in 2004. They made the final again, where they will play France.

In goalball, one of only two Paralympic sports with no Olympic equivalent, Japan won through to face favourites China after both Asian sides beat Scandinavian opposition to win their semi-finals.

In wheelchair basketball, Australia held off a dramatic late rally by the United States and dashed their dreams of a third straight Paralympic wheelchair basketball title, as they progressed to Friday's women's final.

Soares, Makarova win mixed doubles

REUTERS, New York

Russia's Ekaterina Makarova and Brazil's Bruno Soares completed an unlikely run to the US Open mixed doubles title by beating fourth-seeded Kveta Peschke of the Czech Republic and Marcin Matkowski of Poland on Thursday.

Makarova and Soares committed to the tournament at the last minute and the unseeded duo rode the partnership to a grand slam triumph when Peschke failed to return a baseline backhand from Makarova to end their tiebreak 12-10 after splitting the first two sets 6-7, 6-1.

"The best feeling," said Soares, who became the first South American men's player to win the event after coming from a set down and facing a championship point at 9-10 in the tiebreak.

Soares played two grand slam events last year with Makarova but had since teamed up with Australian Jarmila Gajdosova, with whom he played the last four grand slams.

But as the entry deadline time approached, the Brazilian found he would not gain direct entry into the field because his combined ranking with Gajdosova was too low.

Makarova, a mixed doubles runner-up with Jaroslav Levinsky at the 2010 Australian Open, had asked Soares about competing at Flushing Meadows but he told her he was already committed.

South Africa draw level

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giving away only 30 runs in the span of 10 overs as well as picking up 2 wickets.

The South Africans took to the pitch with a target of 180 and it was an enthralling drama till the last run. Part of this owed much to the awful start that the visitors made after they lost their first three wickets inside the eighth over. But Allison Hodgkinson batted sensibly, playing the sheet anchor role as she compiled a sedate 33 off 64 balls.

But it was the player of the match Dane van Niekerk who took the Africans to victory hitting 45 off 64 balls including 3 boundaries and a six. The crucial partnership between her and Shabnim Ismail at the end caused a nervy showdown at a point where it could have been anyone's game.

A couple of horrendous fielding mistakes saw three catches being dropped including two alone by the hapless Tazia Akhter.

After the match captain Salma Khatun bemoaned the fielding gaffes that she felt had cost them a valuable victory.

"Probably if it wasn't for those missed catches we'd have a completely different story on our side," she said. The series is now tied intriguingly at 1-1 and the winners will be decided in the do-or-die clash of the third and final ODI at the same venue on Sunday.

SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH: 179-7 in 50 overs (Sharmin 14, Lata 52,

Farzana 55, extras 23; van Niekerk 2-30, Loubser 2-26) **SOUTH AFRICA:** 180-6 in 49.2 overs (Hodgkinson 33, Kapp 39, van Niekerk 45 not out, Ismail 24 not out, extras 11; Jahanara 3-35, Salma 2-25) **Result:** South Africa women's team won by four wickets.

Player-of-the-match: D van Niekerk (South Africa)

Tigers top

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the same venue.

SCORES IN BRIEF

BARBADOS XI: 65-4 in 8 overs (Omer Phillips 15, Kirk Edwards 5, Kyle Mayers 18, Jonathan Carter 8, Ashley Nurse 15 not out, Alchindo Holder 2 not out, extras 2; Abul Hasan 2-14, Shakib Al Hasan 1-11). **BCB XI:** 71-3 in 6.3 overs (Tamim Iqbal 14, Shakib Al Hasan 13, Mushfiqur Rahim 18, Mahmudullah Riyad 13 not out, Ziaur Rahman 8 not out, extras 5; Ryan Hinds 2-22, Ashley Nurse 1-9). **Result:** BCB XI won by seven wickets.

Siddikur makes

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Kennegard in second place at 10-under-206. Michael Tran is in third position along with American Jonathan Moore and Filipino newcomer Jhonnell Ababa. They are five shots behind leader Thaworn.

Meanwhile, the other Bangladeshi participant Jamal Hossain Mollah slid down to 68th position after a 4-over-par third round.