

NZ to seek Murali's help

Cricket

REUTERS, Christchurch

Test cricket's leading wicket-taker Muttiah Muralidaran will be asked to pass on his expertise to New Zealand's bowlers and batsmen on their tour of Sri Lanka, the country's head coach has said.

The New Zealand-based members of the team leave for the tour, which includes a Twenty20 match, five one day internationals and two Tests, on Thursday with new bowling coach Shane Bond making his first tour with the side.

The former New Zealand paceman was only appointed to the role last week and has had little to do with spin bowlers throughout his career, hence head coach Mike Hesson's decision to seek Muralidaran's help.

The 40-year-old off-spinner retired from the longer form of the game in 2010, capturing his 800th wicket with the final ball of his Test career.

"Obviously Muralidaran lives in Sri Lanka in Colombo and he's someone we've got contacts with," Hesson told reporters at Christchurch airport on Wednesday.

"We haven't been able to firm things up but we're also looking into the possibility of another specialist coach."

"We've got some guys lined up but they add to the mix and help Shane in terms of his development -- and also the players."

"We play half of our cricket in the sub-

continent and even now the West Indies' conditions are very sub-continental. We'll get exposed to a lot of spin, and in this series 70-80 per cent of our overs we face will be spin-based."

"How well we adapt and how well we play them will dictate the outcome."

Local media also reported that former Sri Lankan left arm pace bowler Chaminda Vaas would help Bond work with the attack.

New Zealand have selected three left arm seamers -- Trent Boult, Neil Wagner and James Franklin -- for the tour, while Jeetan Patel and newcomer Todd Astle are the only specialist spin bowlers in the Test squad.

Off-spinner Nathan McCullum and left arm spinner Ronnie Hira have been included in the limited-overs squad, while batsmen Rob Nicol, Martin Guptill and Kane Williamson are handy part-time spinners.

"That [spin bowling] is an area of weakness I think," Bond told Television New Zealand. "In terms of technique, psychology and playing under the pressure it is all the same bowling seam and pace."

"It is probably more getting into the mindset of a spin bowler."

"All I can do is communicate and talk as much as I can with those spin bowlers and still challenge around their plans and what they want to do."

The first match will be the Twenty20 international at Pallekele on October 30.

Nick happy to see KP return

ANI, London

Opening batsman Nick Compton has said he is happy with the return of Kevin Pietersen in the England squad for the India tour, even though it could wreck his own Test dream.

The Somerset star is part of the 17-man squad that flies to Dubai on Thursday for a training camp ahead of their India tour.

Compton was selected as an opener along with Yorkshire's 21-year-old Joe Root, making him a potential replacement for retired ex-captain Andrew Strauss.

But with Pietersen recalled to the tour party following his mid-summer madness, Jonathan Trott could move up the order, which could lead to Compton being left out of the squad for first Test starting on November 15.

"His statistics and the sort of player he is speak for themselves. The chance to be with an England batsman of that calibre is fantastic," the Sun quoted Compton, as saying.

"I don't know what the coaches or the selectors are thinking. All I can do is go out there in the warm-up games and give the best account of myself," he added.

"If I do, hopefully I can put my hand up for a spot. The top three is a place I've identified. KP bats in the middle order so whether we're competing there as well I have no idea," he said.

Compton added: "But if there's an opening spot it's something I would like to grab with both hands."

BCB refutes

FROM PAGE 16

BCB insiders were on-par with the president and criticised Pybus' statements.

A senior board official stated that the English-born cricketer wanted the board to arrange the players' breakfast and lunch from a five-star hotel, something that the board, reportedly, couldn't afford.

He further stated that while they couldn't match Pybus' expectation, they did try to further improve the quality.

Pybus also told ESPNcricinfo that the board had rejected the coach's 'National-camp' plan which he had reportedly submitted last month.

"It was recently suggested that I hadn't put forward preparation plans for the upcoming series against West Indies. This is quite untrue. I had done this last month, but they were rejected nearly three weeks later by the cricket operations department.

Apparently, they know how to prepare better for Test cricket than the coach," he told ESPNcricinfo.

BCB officials however, stated that Pybus plan was never rejected. It was learnt that Pybus wanted to organise one four-day game, played amongst the national players in November, based on which the national selectors would choose their team for the series against the West Indies. The BCB had then asked Pybus to come back to the country for a meeting scheduled to take place on October 9, in order to plan the logistics of the camp. The coach, however, reportedly refused to comply.

PCB to buy bulletproof buses

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan cricket chiefs on Wednesday approved the purchase of bulletproof buses as part of efforts to persuade foreign teams to return after a long suspension over security fears.

No international team has played in Pakistan since the March 2009 attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team bus in Lahore, which left eight people dead and seven visiting players wounded.

But the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) hopes internationals could be revived as early as next year following the successful staging of two exhibition matches in Karachi involving an International World XI in Karachi at the weekend.

The PCB governing board met in Abbottabad -- the garrison town north of Islamabad where Osama bin Laden was killed in a US raid last year -- to agree to buy the armoured transport.

Papon sets

FROM PAGE 16

hasn't given us the time to discuss the proposed changes mutually. I'll contact the NSC officials and request them to extend their deadline," said Papon.

Amongst the other issues, the board appointed Australian Stuart Karppinen as the Performance Manager of the BCB's National Cricket Academy. They also hired Ranadeb Bose from India, as a coach under the Game Development Department.

The meeting also approved the audited financial statement of the BCB for the financial year of 2011-2012 and have approved the development of the Mymensingh Circuit House Ground.

Women start

FROM PAGE 16

a good start sending back two batswomen inside the seventh over but opener Sun Meng Yao and two-down Sun Huan rescued China putting up some runs on the board. Huan top-scored with 29 off 39 balls followed by Meng Yao who scored 11. Panna Ghosh grabbed two wickets for 11 while Salam Khutun and Khadija Tul Kubra took one wicket each.

Valencia ended BATE Borisov's perfect start in Group F with Roberto Soldado's hat-trick securing a 3-0 win in Belarus. With Bayern winning 1-0 at Lille with a Thomas Mueller penalty, Valencia, BATE and Bayern all have six points with Lille on none.

Scheduling dilemma sees BD pull out

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh have pulled out of the Brighton Cup hockey tournament after being placed directly in the knock-out phase. But they will now take part in Lal Bahadur Shastri Hockey tournament following the Nehru Cup in New Delhi, India.

"Generally a team outside India is placed in the round-robin phase of Brighton Cup instead of the knock-out phase, but this time the organisers put Bangladesh in the knock-out phase," head coach Mahbub Harun said. "If the team suffers defeat in the first match, we will face a dilemma about whether to come back home or move to Delhi. Because of this, the federation decided not to send the team in Kolkata."

Harun however informed that they will now take part in two tournaments in New Delhi to make up for their loss as both the Nehru Cup and Lal Bahadur Shastri will take place at the same venue.

"After the completion of Nehru Cup, the Lal Bahadur Shastri Hockey tournament will get underway. Apart from those two tournaments, the boys will also play four to five practice matches against different teams in Delhi," said Harun.

As part of the preparation for the World Hockey League's second round, Bangladesh were supposed to take part in the Brighton Cup to be held in Kolkata from November 1-12 and then travel to New Delhi to participate in the Nehru Cup (Nov 14-25). But the Bangladesh Hockey Federation decided not to send the team to Kolkata as the team will have nothing to do if they are eliminated in the first match on November 6.

Bangladesh U-23 team were also scheduled to take part in an Invitation Hockey Tournament in Pakistan in November but the organisers were forced to postpone the tournament as the International Hockey Federation did not allow Pakistan to host the tournament for security concern.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh have been training for two tournaments since October 2 and the boys have been given a five-day break for Eid holidays as the camp will resume on October 30.

Shakhtar strike

FROM PAGE 18

whole team and I just had the good fortune to be in the right place," he said. "I don't know what the Celtic players eat, but they are very powerful in the air, in defence as well as attack," he added.

Barca lead Group G with nine points from three wins, ahead of Celtic on four while Spartak Moscow have moved on to three points after their first win of the campaign, 2-1 at home to Benfica thanks to Jardel's own goal.

Manchester United avoided an upset at Old Trafford, coming from behind to beat Braga 3-2 after being 2-0 down inside the first 20 minutes as Alan found the key to unlocking United's defence with two crisp finishes.

United fought back with two headers from Javier Hernandez either side of a Jonny Evans goal which he scrambled in with his left foot after missing his kick with his right one.

United manager Alex Ferguson told ITV that conceding early goals was a fault they needed to correct.

It was United's third successive win and they top Group H with nine points, followed by CFR Cluj on four after they drew 1-1 at Galatasaray. Braga have three and the Turkish side one.

In a lively match in Istanbul, Cluj had Matias Aguirregaray sent off after 28 minutes and Felipe Melo scored a penalty for Galatasaray seven minutes later.

Dany Nounkeu put through his own net to give Cluj the lead after 19 minutes before Burak Yilmaz equalised for the home side 13 minutes from time.

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Maria Sharapova of Russia pumps her fist in celebration after beating Sara Errani of Italy in the round-robin stage of the WTA Championships in Istanbul on Tuesday. Sharapova won 6-3, 6-2.

PHOTO: AFP

Port Div I champions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chittagong Port Sports Association clinched the First Division Football League title for the first time defeating Rising Star Club 2-0 at the MA Aziz Stadium yesterday.

The triumph also earned them a promotion to the Premier Division.

The Port side started the match with the advantage that a draw would suffice them. On the other hand, it was a must-win game for the vanquished. And although the winners succeeded convincingly, they had to wait until the 78th minute to break the deadlock.

After missing easy chances in the 7th, 12th and 44th minutes, Nazrul Islam Sumon gave the Port side the lead with a placing shot. Four minutes later, Rony netted doubled the margin.

After the match, general secretary of Chittagong Jela Krira Sangsta AJM Nasiruddin distributed prizes.

Pybus blames BCB

FROM PAGE 16

directors and was given that assurance by board president [Mustafa] Kamal. In reality that was never the case. My position was undermined consistently by interference from the board, some of whom were not only obstructive, but seemed to be completely ignorant of cricket.

I've learnt in over twenty years of coaching professionally that if you don't have full accountability and responsibility for your work, then those boundaries will be interfered with. You sink and swim with your players and coaching team. When we get it wrong we lose our jobs, that's professional sport, we understand that. Administrators don't lose their jobs, but when you win everyone wants ownership of it.

Can you give examples of the interference?

Definitely, there were a few times I couldn't make any decisions as a coach without getting permission from the cricket operations department. I couldn't even get the board to sign off on providing healthy sandwiches for the players after training. Players were going down with food poisoning during camps, so I wanted to offer them something better than a fried egg sandwich. I was told I couldn't, because that was all the budget could afford.

In our preparations for the World T20, I flagged three months earlier that our game analysis system wasn't giving us access to detailed information about the opposition. It was a license you would not use for a schoolboy team, never mind a national team. The board dithered for weeks on this, and they still haven't made a decision on it. Our primary opportunity to do well at the T20 World Cup was to prepare better than the opposition sides, because we had the time in our schedule, which they didn't. The analysis was only granted to us by the time we arrived in Sri Lanka, by which time it was virtually worthless. We must have been the only side at the World T20 who hadn't had access to basic opposition analysis.

I had highlighted the issues with interference, having board directors acting operationally on tours as head of the tour delegation, when in fact that is the team manager's job. They wanted to sit in on team meetings, the team bus and the dressing room.

The captain and I left out two senior players when we were in Trinidad for a T20 competition prior to the WT20. They were carrying niggles and we wanted to rest them so they were fit for the World Cup. These players were called

at 1 am in the morning after the game, with the captain, team physiotherapist and team manager. The players were given a dressing down for letting the country down and told that they could be sent home if they weren't fit. Conveniently, I was not invited to this meeting.

It was recently suggested that I hadn't put forward preparation plans for the upcoming series against West Indies. This is quite untrue. I had done this last month, but they were rejected nearly three weeks later by the cricket operations department. Apparently, they know how to prepare better for Test cricket than the coach. When you first went to Bangladesh, you said you were excited by the challenge. Did that change at all in the course of your time there?

I've always been driven by winning and excellence as a coach. I knew when I took the job that the team hadn't had a lot of 'winning' success, so the focus was going to be on building on the progress they had made, and focusing on getting excellence in our individual and team preparation. I took the job because I was excited about helping an emerging nation develop. I didn't look at it as a career move. I've been fortunate to have achieved many of my coaching goals, and I really saw it as an opportunity to help Bangladesh to grow in cricket terms.

Do you see promise in Bangladesh cricket and will you miss the players and the opportunity to help them improve?

There is promise, but they have to get their feeder structures right if they want consistent success. Richard McInnes (the National Academy director) and I proposed a streamlining of their player production system, but it was rejected. Cricket Operations refused to work with Richard in running the feeder teams to the national side. They have an exceptional young man in their captain, Mushfiqur Rahim, and genuine international potential in Shakib Al Hasan, Tamim Iqbal and others. There is a core of genuinely passionate administrators, but they seemed to be swamped by politics.

Is there a danger