

## Morkel parts ways with PCB

South African Morne Morkel has resigned as Pakistan’s bowling coach, the country’s cricket board (PCB) announced on Monday, two days after their failure to reach the semifinals of the World Cup in India.

Pakistan finished fifth in the standings with eight points having won four matches and losing five, with their final defeat by outgoing champions England on Saturday ruling them out of contention for the knockout stages of the tournament.

The former South Africa fast bowler had joined the team on a six-month contract in June.

“Pakistan Cricket Board will announce his replacement in due course,” the PCB said in a short statement without providing any reason for Morkel’s departure.

Morkel had joined the team for their two-match test series against Sri Lanka, which they won 2-0, before a one-day series against Afghanistan and the disappointing Asia Cup campaign.

Pakistan’s next assignment is a three-match away test series against Australia from Dec. 14 to Jan. 7, 2024.

Most cricketers would argue that good preparations make for good World Cup campaigns but after an injury-plagued buildup and a string of other setbacks Australia spinner Adam Zampa might have a different take.

Zampa, who heads into Thursday’s semi-final against South Africa as the tournament’s leading wicket-taker with 22 victims, picked up a glute injury in the one-day series against India in the leadup, which left him hobbled in Australia’s opening World Cup defeats against the hosts and the Proteas.

With Ashton Agar ruled out of the tournament with a calf problem, Australia’s physios were desperate to get 31-year-old Zampa, the only specialist spinner left in the squad, back to full fitness.

His next injury was self-inflicted, the leg-spinner cutting his face open by crashing into the wall of the hotel pool in Chennai while swimming.

Remedial work on the glute injury triggered back spasms prior to the match against Sri Lanka but Zampa went out and took four wickets anyway, despite feeling woozy from “too much pain relief”.

Zampa then dragged himself out of his sick bed after suffering a fever before the Pakistan match to take another four-wicket haul and help Australia to a second win.

Dubbed ‘Lazarus’ by his captain Pat Cummins,



Zampa has not looked back, helping Australia remain undefeated since the early South Africa loss.

His two-wicket haul against Bangladesh over the weekend saw him become his nation’s most successful spinner at a 50-over World Cup, moving past Brad Hogg’s previous mark of 21 wickets at the 2007 tournament in the West Indies.

Another two wickets at this World Cup would see Zampa leapfrog Muthiah Muralidaran’s all-time record of 23 from a single tournament, also set in 2007.

Meanwhile, India spinner Kuldeep Yadav expects the bowlers to have a tough time at Mumbai’s batting-friendly Wankhede Stadium when the hosts take on New Zealand in their World Cup semi-final on Wednesday.



South Africa posted 399-7 against England and 382-5 against Bangladesh while India made 357-8 against Sri Lanka at the venue before Glenn Maxwell smashed an extraordinary double century as Australia chased down 291 against Afghanistan last week.

“It’s a difficult venue to bowl in. The bounce is true and batsmen often dominate there,” Kuldeep told reporters on Sunday after India beat the Netherlands.

Kuldeep has claimed 14 wickets during India’s run of nine straight victories at the tournament.

“I just work on my rhythm and strengths and focus on how the batsmen are trying to play me. My aim is to land the ball on the good length area as much as possible,” he said.

Spinners were predicted to dominate in the World Cup in India but the fast-bowlers have enjoyed more success.

Australia’s Adam Zampa, however, leads the wicket-takers pack but the next spinner in the list, Ravindra Jadeja of India, occupies the eighth spot.

Among the top 14 wicket-takers in the World Cup so far, six are spinners: Zampa (1), Jadeja (8), Mitchell Santner (9), Adil Rashid (12), Kuldeep Yadav (13) and Keshav Maharaj (14).

All semifinalists have at least one spinner representative in the top 14, with India the only side featuring two. Jadeja and Kuldeep’s economy-rates are only bettered by India quick Jasprit Bumrah.

# Maxwell’s cinematic knock and the charm of ODIs

If the group-stage matches of the ICC World Cup 2023 were all separate feature-length movies, what would their genres be?

Cricket, like any other sport, is just another form of entertainment. Although some cricket purists will shudder at the thought of the gentlemen’s game getting compared with just any other pastime, that doesn’t change the reality.

In that sense, comparing cricket with movies, the most accessible form of modern entertainment, is not that far-fetched.

Now, continuing with this comparison, the majority of the matches in the group stage, which came to a close on Sunday, were sort of like European art-house movies, they kept dragging on and on with very little payoff.

There were a few interesting matches in between, like the South Africa-Pakistan match in Chennai which the former won by one wicket, much like an enjoyable thriller or a murder mystery or a classic whodunit, as the fans did not know who would come out on top till the very end.

Afghanistan’s wins over England, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were like the perfect underdog stories, where a group of spirited individuals came together to overcome their much stronger adversaries.

However, one of the underdog triumphs of the World Cup, the Netherlands’ win over Bangladesh, felt more like a Shakespearean tragedy to the average Bangladesh fan.

Out of all 45 matches in the group stage, only one really stood out as the quintessential Hollywood action blockbuster, where one wounded man took on a literal army against insurmountable odds and in some miraculous way, came out on top.

On November 7, at the Wankhede



Stadium in Mumbai, Australia’s Glenn Maxwell put on a show that surpassed the confines of a cricketing innings and entered the realms of cinema.

Maxwell looked like a man possessed as if the spirits of the machine-gun-wielding macho men of the silver screens from the ‘80s and ‘90s Hollywood movies had taken over him. Instead of guns and ammunition, he had a willow in his hand and that’s all he required to set ablaze whatever the Afghan bowlers could dish out.

Chasing 292, Australia were down and out for the count in the 19th over after losing their seventh wicket for 91 runs.

Maxwell was batting on 22 off 26 balls and was joined by his skipper Pat Cummins.

The match looked well and truly out of Australia’s reach and their best bet was to reduce the margin of defeat as much as possible to lessen the incoming dent in their net run rate.

But after surviving a wrong LBW decision and getting dropped in the same over, Maxwell perhaps realised the universe was setting up the stage for him

to work his magic, and he obliged.

Maxwell kept chopping the target down bit by bit with each swing of his bat, fighting severe cramps and body spasms which almost forced him to throw in the towel.

In the last stretch of his innings, Maxwell stood mostly still at the crease, with little to no foot movement and still smashed balls for sixes and fours almost at will.

With just 21 runs needed to win, Maxwell hit Mujeeb Ur Rahman, the man who gave him a second life, for 6, 6, 4 and 6 to complete his double century and win the match for the Aussies as a mostly Indian crowd erupted in a massive cheer.

On the face of it, Maxwell’s carnage in Mumbai seems like another example of how Twenty20, the other white-ball format which many believe will become the only shorter format in cricket in the near future, has revolutionised the game.

However, a deeper inspection shows that even though T20 as a format is undoubtedly more dynamic, it cannot provide the canvas for an innings like Maxwell’s, because there simply is not

enough time.

Maxwell’s 201 off 128 balls broke a host of records and is being hailed as the greatest ODI innings of all time.

But one could argue that it wasn’t Maxwell’s storm that won Australia the match, it was the 202-run stand between him and Cummins that won them the game.

While Maxwell was going berserk at the other end, it was Cummins’ resilient 12 off 68 balls that made sure Australia stayed alive in the contest.

Considering the circumstances in which the partnership was formed, Maxwell and Cummins’ stand in Mumbai was truly special, however, it wasn’t a unique occurrence in ODIs.

Yes, their partnership was unlike anything seen in recent memory. But wickets falling in clusters early on, then two players forming a partnership, continuously chipping away at the target and slowly but surely pulling off an unlikely victory is a script many ODIs have followed over the years.

The perseverance required to pull off this gradual transition of momentum is an intriguing aspect of the 50-over game, one that would get lost from white-ball cricket if this format ceases to exist.

Many hoped that the World Cup in India would breathe life into the ODI format after a stagnant few years. But the long list of drab affairs in the tournament only strengthened the arguments against it.

But Maxwell’s innings and Australia’s incredible come-from-behind victory was a reminder that the ODI format can deliver a thrill that is just not feasible in T20s.

So, before calling ‘time out’ on ODIs, maybe the cricket world needs to re-watch Maxwell’s belligerence and Cummins’ resilience against Afghanistan to remind themselves of the unique charm of ODIs.

## World Cup fiasco not in BCB’s immediate focus?

Bangladesh team returned to the country on Sunday following their final World Cup game against Australia in Pune and the time for retrospection after the debacle has not been actively pursued by the board yet.

Even at Mirpur’s Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, there was no apparent activity apart from the humdrum in the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) offices yesterday, although few media personnel expected head coach Chandika Hathurusingha, who returned to the country with the team, to show up.

It was learned that Hathurusingha will hand over a report regarding the World Cup debacle. Team director Khaled Mahmud will also be providing a separate report on the World Cup performances.

BCB sources have said that the plans for the New Zealand series later this month are on the head coach’s agenda at the moment. To oversee squad selection and build up to the series, Hathurusingha did not take a vacation this time around following a big tournament.

Apart from the yet-to-be-submitted reports by the head coach and the team director, no other developments were confirmed and the BCB is yet to make any statements regarding what would be done to assess the World Cup performance or what moves would be taken following the disappointing results.

The last round of the National Cricket League was slated to begin on November 16 but has been pushed back by two days to create time for the national team players to gear up for the tournament. “All the players who will feature in the Test series will be playing the NCL,” a BCB official confirmed to The Daily Star yesterday.

It is expected that Hathurusingha will attend NCL matches. However, it could not be ascertained which games he will be attending personally. The last round’s NCL matches will be part of the preparation for the Tests and the team would then return to training following a day’s rest.

## Booters face acclimatisation concern in Australia



Faisal Ahmed Fahim, Rahmat Mia and Bishwanath Ghosh participate in a stretching session of Bangladesh football team at the Yarraville Glory Football Club ground in Melbourne yesterday in their build-up to the World Cup qualifying fixture against Australia on Thursday.

PHOTO: BFF

Two days into Australia, the national football team’s booters are still battling to adjust to the chilly temperature in Melbourne, but they expect to acclimate before the match against Australia on Thursday.

Following their arduous 20-hour flight from Dhaka to Melbourne, the charges of Spanish coach Jaiver Cabrera went through a recovery session at the team hotel before conducting their first training session with the ball yesterday at the Yarraville Glory Football Club site in Victoria.

Despite the frigid and windy conditions, the men in red and green focused on technical and tactical areas to tackle the FIFA-ranked 27th side, who faced Ecuador, Argentina, Mexico, and England this year.

“It has overall been quite good preparation on the first day of the training. The weather has been cold compared to Bangladesh’s and that’s why we are facing a bit of a problem.

However, the coach wants us to adjust with the weather quickly, then it will help us play the match against Australia,” winger Mohammad Ibrahim said in a video message sent by Bangladesh Football Federation.

Ibrahim added, “Can’t deny that they [Australia] are one of best teams in the world, so our job is to spoil their attack as much as possible, and today [Monday] we practiced how to form the defensive blocks against them.”

Captain Jamal Bhuiya also revealed that his teammates are struggling with the chilly conditions, but he feels that everyone will be ready for the match against Australia.

“It was great that the entire team had the first practice in Melbourne after only two days. It’s cold here, and everyone felt it except me and Tareq, who are used to it,” Jamal said.

“I believe everyone would adopt within one or two days as we have to play at 8 pm. Everyone is confident and concentrating hundred percent on the match.”

## Had to bide my time and be patient: Maguire

Harry Maguire says he feels vindicated over his decision to stay and fight for his place at Manchester United after forcing his way back into Erik ten Hag’s team.

The 30-year-old England defender’s future appeared to lie away from Old Trafford after he lost his starting place last season and was stripped of the captaincy but he ended up staying put.

Maguire remained confident he would win his place back and has started the club’s past eight matches in all competitions.

Asked if it feels like personal vindication for staying at United, he said: “Of course. “I played a few games last year, 16 or 17 starts, and I felt I performed really well in the games I played in. I just didn’t play as many as I would have liked.

“On the other hand, Rapha (Varane) and Licha (Lisandro Martinez) were playing brilliantly and kept numerous clean sheets. I had to bide my time and be patient.

“I had two or three opportunities last season to get a run of games but I broke down with illness, I broke down with injuries twice, so I never got the run of games that I could prove myself.”