



Bangladesh's fans erupted after their side's win

Ashwin takes three on County debut, wants to play all 4 games

WORCESTER, Aug 30 /- Ravichandran Ashwin, who started his maiden county stint for Worcestershire on a decent note taking 3/94 and scoring 36 against Gloucestershire, wants to play all the four games even though he might get called up for the limited overs series against Australia. With the selectors wanting Ashwin to play a major role in next year's five-Test series against England, the BCCI is likely to allow the Tamil Nadu off-spinner to miss the upcoming limited-over series against Australia. "I could be called to play in the Australia series," Ashwin told ESPNcricinfo.

In that case, Ashwin will get to play only one more match against Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge.

"But I have indicated to Bumpy (Steve Rhodes, the Worcestershire director of cricket) that I will be available for all four games. As of now, there are no communication channels (with BCCI) open but they will be shortly, so I will probably get a clearer idea after the Sri Lanka series," he said. For Ashwin, the next year's England series is certainly in consideration but not the sole reason for this stint. "It's not just about next year. It's always been a dream to play county cricket. I grew up watching it on TV in India and it has always meant a lot. Spinners have come before and told me it is a must-do experience. I was being rested from the (limited overs) series (against Sri Lanka), so I thought I might as well come here to get experience," he said. However, he is sure that this stint will help him a lot during the 2018 series. "But next year is in the back of my mind and in the back of the mind of the team management back home. With the pace with which the international cricket calendar is set-up, you don't have a long time to prepare. That might even cost you a Test match. So these experiences can be banked upon - and, if you can learn faster - which I pride myself upon - the results can come a bit faster," Ashwin said.

PVSindhu, coach Gopichand call on Tel CM

HYDERABAD, AUG 30 /- Ace shuttler P V Sindhu, who won silver medal in the recent World Cup on the onship, and Chief National Coach P Gopichand today met Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababu Naidu. Sindhu, who congratulated Sindhu, said she put up a competitive performance in the world event though she narrowly lost gold medal, a release from his office said. Rao wished her good luck next time, it said. Sindhu won silver medal after losing to Japanese Nozomi Okuhara in the finals of the World Championship held at Glasgow. (PTI)

Bangladesh eye series triumph after maiden Australia win

DHAKA, AUG 30 /- Home captain Mushfiqur Rahim warned Australia that an increasingly confident England would be going all out for what would be a sensational series triumph after securing a maiden Test victory over the tourists on Wednesday.

The 20-run victory at Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium came five months after Bangladesh secured their first Test win over Sri Lanka and a month before the first anniversary of their maiden triumph over England in the longest form of the game.

Mushfiqur said the first innings partnership of 155 between England's Stuart Broad and Alastair Cook was the key to their success. He said the team was working hard and if you see at the last few series, they are much better now," he said. "In this Test, the wicket was pretty tough to bat on, that's why the wicket was the top order also found it difficult to bat.

"The boys showed character. All the credit goes to the bowlers, and fielders. They did miss some (catches) but it can happen. Hopefully we'll come harder at them in the next test and hopefully we'll seal the series." Australia did well to make the test so close after starting the second innings needing 265 to win on a deteriorating pitch. David Warner top-scored with a brilliant 112 but captain Steve Smith said they ultimately paid the price for a poor performance in the first innings, when they made 217. "It was a great Test match, credit to Bangladesh the way they played," he said.

In the first innings the partnership between Tamim and Shakib really set the game up for them and then I thought we really fought back and we were probably let ourselves down in the first innings with the bat, probably should have made a few more there. It was pretty difficult batting here because of the conditions and I thought we did pretty well to get 240 in the end. "It's set up for a really good series." Chittagong hosts the second and final Test from Monday.

Steve O'Keefe replaces injured Hazlewood for second Test against Bangladesh

SYDNEY, AUG 30 /- Australia could yet line up against Bangladesh after Steve O'Keefe to replace injured quick Josh Hazlewood for the second and final test against Bangladesh. Hazlewood will return home for rehabilitation at the end of the opening test and miss the second match in Chittagong as well as the limited overs tour of India which follows. Fast bowler Kane Richardson will replace Hazlewood in India but the presence of like-for-like replacement Jackson Bird in the test squad in Bangladesh means a recall for O'Keefe. The left-arm finger spinner was considered unfortunate to miss out on the trip to Bangladesh after taking 19 wickets at an average of 23.26, including 12 in the first test at Pune, on the test tour of India earlier this year. O'Keefe, 32, was fined \$20,000 (\$10,000) for "highly inappropriate behaviour" towards a female cricketer while drunk at an award ceremony in April, however, and failed to get a national contract. Fears that his misbehaviour, a second indiscretion involving alcohol in 18 months, might have brought an end to his international career were apparently mis-

placed, however. "With Jackson Bird in the squad we are comfortable with our fast-bowling options for the second test and have elected to add an additional spinner given the conditions we are likely to face in Chittagong," Australia's head selector Trevor Hohns said in a statement on Wednesday. Hazlewood's contribution to the Bangladesh tour may not be over yet, despite the left side strain that team physiotherapist David Beakley said would require "several weeks of rehabilitation". Australia go into day four of the test at Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium needing 156 more runs to win with eight wickets in hand and Hazlewood will bat if necessary. The loss of the hardest of Australia's pace bowlers just a few months before they host England in an Ashes series around the New Year is a blow, however. While Pat Cummins, James Pattinson and Mitchell Starc have been frequent visitors to the treatment room, Hazlewood has been his country's most reliable fast bowler since making his test debut in late 2014. The Ashes series begins in Brisbane on Nov. 23.

Sharjeel gets five-year ban in spot-fixing case

KARACHI, AUG 30 /- Test batsman Sharjeel Khan was on Wednesday handed a five-year ban by the anti-corruption tribunal of the PCB for his role in a spot-fixing scandal during the Pakistan Super League (PSL) in February this year. Sharjeel was banned for breaching five clauses of the anti-corruption code of the PCB. A short order released by the tribunal said that Sharjeel would serve the five-year ban in two phases with two-and-a-half years being a suspended sentence to be served under observation of the PCB. The ban is effective from February to the year when he was first suspended and sent back from Dubai on spot-fixing charges along with another Pakistan player Khalid Latif. The punishment imposed by the tribunal, headed by a former Lahore High Court judge Justice Asghar Haider means that Sharjeel, 28, can revive his career after two years. "We are okay with the decision and like I had said, the PCB was unable to produce sufficient evidence to convince the tribunal that my client did indeed do spot-fixing," his lawyer, Shaighan Ejaz told the media. Sharjeel, who has played in one Test, 25 One-Dayers and 25 T20 matches was hailed as a "warrior" for Pakistan by former head coach, Waqar Younis, who said he was very disappointed after learning about Sharjeel's PSL fixing issue.

The tribunal's decision is as a setback for the PCB which had repeatedly claimed to have sufficient evidence against Sharjeel in the case. The PCB had even asked the tribunal for a life ban on the two players. The tribunal will give a verdict on Latif's case next month after first starting its hearings into the PSL fixing cases in April this year. The PCB claims that Sharjeel and Khalid met with bookmakers in Dubai and the former accepted a spot-fixing offer and played two dot balls as per a deal with the bookmaker. Sharjeel has denied playing the dot balls as part of a spot-fixing deal and his lawyer produced expert witnesses - former Test batsmen Dean Jones, Muhammad Younis and Sadiq Muhammad - to confirm Sharjeel played the balls on merit in the first match of the PSL this year. Sharjeel is not the first Pakistani to be banned in a corruption case as before him former Pakistan Test captain Salim Malik was given a life ban for match-fixing by the Justice Malik Qayyum inquiry commission in 2000 but a lower court later overturned the ban. In early 2011, another Pakistani captain, Salman Butt and pacers, Muhammad Amir and Muhammad Asif were given minimum five-year bans by an ICC anti-corruption tribunal for spot-fixing during the series in England in 2010. All three completed their bans and are now back playing competitive cricket with Amir making a comeback for the Pakistan team as well. In 2012-13, Pakistan Test spinner, Danish Kaneria was banned for being an ICC anti-corruption tribunal of the England and Wales Cricket Board for fixing in English county cricket while playing for Essex. Other players have also been fined for not cooperating with the Justice Qayyum inquiry. (PTI)

UAE beat Saudi Arabia to boost World Cup hopes

AL-AIN (United Arab Emirates), Aug 30 /- The UAE maintained their hopes of qualifying for the 2018 World Cup in Russia with a shock 2-1 victory at home against regional giants Saudi Arabia on Tuesday. It was only the fourth win in nine matches for the Emirates, who took their tally to 13 points from nine matches to be placed fourth in Group B in the final round of Asian qualifying. Japan top the standings with 17 points with Saudi Arabia and Australia on 16 each, meaning all the top four teams in the group are in with a chance of clinching the two automatic spots for next year's finals. The UAE's victory on Tuesday in Al-Ain was the first win for them because they bounced back within a minute after being a goal down to stun the powerful Saudis. The hosts had conceded a penalty when Mohamed Fawzi fouled Nawal al-Abid in the penalty area and Al-Abid himself slotted the ball home with a left-footed shot to put the Saudis ahead in the 30th minute. But barely had the Saudi celebrations died down when the home side struck for the equalizer. A Tariq Ahmed cross found Ali Mabkhout and the UAE star made no mistake with a right-footed shot from the centre of the box into the bottom corner.

Suarez, Messi likely to go head-to-head as Argentina face Uruguay in WC qualifiers

MONTEVIDEO, AUG 30 /- Luis Suarez could yet line up against Barcelona teammate Lionel Messi on Thursday as South America's battle for 2018 World Cup places resumed with Argentina's trip to Uruguay the pick of the fixtures.

With leaders Brazil already locking up their place at next year's tournament, attention turns to the three remaining automatic berths on offer in the marathon 10-team qualifying tournament. Colombia are second in the standings on 24 points, but have conceded six goals in the other two automatic spots on 23 points.

It means that fifth-placed Argentina have little margin for error as they head to Montevideo to face Uruguay in the latest installment of their historic rivalry with the Uruguayans. Argentina have spluttered their way through the qualifiers so far, notching only six wins in 14 games, but have shown signs of life under new coach Jorge Sampaoli. Sampaoli, who masterminded Chile's victory at the 2015 Copa America, took over in May, and began his reign with a morale-boosting 1-0 win over Brazil in a friendly in June. A 6-0 romp over lowly Singapore produced his first win, and his aggressive, attacking style, may already have begun to have an influence. Sampaoli served notice of his determination to turn Argentina's fortunes by sending striker Gonzalo Higuain in favour of Inter Milan's Mauro Icardi. Icardi is expected to start at the apex of a front three with Messi and Diego Costa, but Higuain's Dybala lurking just behind. Argentina's path to Russia has been complicated by the

Court of Arbitration for Sport ruling on Tuesday that confirmed a sanction against Bolivia for fielding an ineligible player in their September 2016 0-0 draw with Chile. FIFA later annulled that result to a 3-0 win for Chile, a ruling that means Sampaoli's former team now has a one-point advantage over the fifth-placed Argentines. "Now we have to play catch-up to get to the World Cup," Sampaoli said Tuesday. Uruguay meanwhile are sweating on the fitness of Barcelona star Suarez. The 30-year-old talismanic striker was ruled out of the fixture through injury but has travelled back to his homeland to train with the team. Veteran coach Oscar Tabarez hinted Suarez may yet make a dramatic return on Thursday, declining to rule out the striker.

"He has shown signs of recovery that have rather surprised us," Tabarez said. If Suarez fails to win his fitness battle, Uruguay will once again turn to in-form Paris Saint-Germain striker Edinson Cavani, who is the top scorer in the qualifying competition with nine goals. "It is a very difficult match... We will see who has the most goals for it," said Tabarez. Elsewhere on Thursday, second-placed Colombia will aim to edge ahead of Argentina in the qualifying positions. Brazil will have the luxury of being able to treat their game against Ecuador in Porto Alegre as a training exercise after securing their place in their last outing, a 3-0 win over Paraguay in March - their eighth consecutive victory.

Fist of Bidhuri: Gaurav 'hooks' self doubts to win World medal

HAMBURG, AUG 30 /- Confidence bruised by near-misses and a nagging back injury - this is what Gaurav Bidhuri carried into the World Boxing Championships here before his career got a new lease of life by the lone medal he assured for India.

The 24-year-old was not even meant to be in the team till the second half of July which is when fortune smiled on him and he was handed a wildcard entry by the Asian Boxing Confederation (ASBC).

"I was in a bad mood because I got a wildcard entry. I went around confirming it with every coach. I kept asking 'is this right?' I asked each one of them. I asked Gaurav to tell me to break this jinx," he spoke about that which had made him, it finally eased up a bit," the relief was palpable as Gaurav spoke to PTI during an interview after the play-off. The Delhi native has been among the most talked about in Indian circuit and has been prone to making quarter-final exits in almost every tournament he has picked for. The most recent of these quarterfinal exits happened in the Asian Championships in Tashkent earlier this year, where he twice missed the chance to qualify directly for the world showpiece.

"I have nearly always lost in the quarterfinal stage of every tournament that I have competed in. Here, also, once I reached quarters, I was having these negative thoughts that 'maybe again the same thing will happen, I will lose, that I am not good enough. But then another part of me was saying that I will win this time. I spoke about how he sparred with creeping self-doubts. Asked how he steered up for competing despite his seemingly volatile mind, Gaurav conceded it wasn't easy to shake off negativity. "It is the toughest part of being an athlete, to control the mind. I was having all kinds of thoughts. All of them were not negative but then not every thought was

positive too. There was a lot of noise in my mind, something which only I could hear," smiled the youngster. And now, Gaurav might become the first Indian boxer to win a medal better than bronze at the prestigious championships should he go on to win his semi-final on Thursday. "I have been reading a lot of injuries but I don't care about them. I have had severe back problems for the last seven-eight months but I did not care about that and have been training regularly. I really like to have my own coach. Gaurav said. Gaurav will fight his bantamweight (56kg) semifinal bout against American Duke Ragan tomorrow. By adding another medal to his tally he joins Vijender Singh (2009), Vikas Krishan (2011) and Shiva Thappa (2015) in a select band of Indian boxers to have finished on a podium at the biennial mega-event. Tomorrow, he wants to go a step ahead of Vijender, Vikas and Shiva and make the final to ensure that India finishes with a medal better than bronze. He said it would also help him get closure for all the near misses of the past, which also includes a quarterfinal exit from an Olympic qualifying event last year. This, despite the fact that he had been in good form coming into the tournament. He had won a gold medal at an invitational tournament in Czech Republic in July but was still a long way off from being even considered a top medal contender here. However, his prequalifier win over Ukraine's Mykola Klymchuk at the two-time European Championships silver-medallist and 2013 world champion's bronze-winner, brought him into focus. He is ready to fight pain but he would like to add a different colour to his medal. "I am suffering actually I can't sit for too long and can't even sleep for too long. I have trouble walking as well but it's all worth it now," the Delhi lad said.

Mission impossible? Nadal wants New Yorkers to be quiet

NEW YORK, AUG 30 /- Rafael Nadal has conquered the French Open 10 times and battled career-threatening knee and wrist injuries, but his greatest challenge awaits him -- telling rowdy New Yorkers to be quiet. The world number one, who probably let ourselves down in the first innings with the bat, probably should have made a few more there. It was pretty difficult batting here because of the conditions and I thought we did pretty well to get 240 in the end. "It's set up for a really good series." Chittagong hosts the second and final Test from Monday.

NEW YORKERs are queuing the French Open 10 times and battled career-threatening knee and wrist injuries, but his greatest challenge awaits him -- telling rowdy New Yorkers to be quiet. The "Being honest, it (the noise) is a little bit too much," said the 31-year-old Spaniard, whose Grand Slam titles include the 2010 and 2013 US Open crowns. "The energy and support of the fans here is something I really enjoy it and I have unforgettable memories from this tournament and this crowd is the best. It is different from in other places. "But at the same time, under the roof, it's too noisy. I am not able to hear the ball when hitting." "I understand it is a show, but under the roof we need to be a little more strict about the noise. All the noise stays inside, and this is difficult." Nadal's complaints echoed similar concerns made by Andy Murray last year when the huge 150 million roof over the world's biggest tennis stadium was rolled into action for the first time. Murray, the 2012 champion, complained that when the rain was bouncing off the outside of the roof, it was impossible to hear the calls inside. Even the umpire in that match appealed to spectators to cut the volume, a separate appeal came during the tournament's famed night sessions when the alcohol-fueled atmosphere is not for the meek. Nadal said he was unable to hear the ball and that his opponent couldn't hear him when he asked for a service game to be delayed. Meanwhile, Nadal said he was equally flummoxed by Murray's decision to withdraw from the US Open last Sunday. "I am a little draw had been made. Murray was suffering from a hip injury and his decision to pull out of the event, where he would have been second seed, came too late to affect Nadal's hopes of the draw which he shares with old rival Roger Federer.

Book relives tours of Indian cricket teams since 1886

NEW DELHI, AUG 30 /- A new book takes an independent look at the role of Indian cricket in colonial and post-colonial India, and the relationship among those who patronise, provide, play and view the sport by analysing every Indian cricket tour since 1886. In "Eleven Gods and a Billion Indians: The On and Off the Field Story of Cricket in India and Beyond", Boria Majumdar takes the reader backstage to when India played its first test in 1932, and bringing the story forward to the more contemporary IPL - to provide a complete and nuanced understanding of the evolution and maturity of the game. "Eleven Gods and a Billion Indians" unravels the story of

a nation now considered the financial vice centre of world cricket, said publishers Simon & Schuster India about the book which will hit stores in August 2018. "Many still argue that the 'Virat Kohli-Anil Kumble saga' was very different from the Sourav-Chappell rift or They're both right and

wrong. Right because the Kohli-Kumble spat never played out in public in the manner of the previous two flashpoints," said Majumdar. "But, then, why am I writing about the most recent captain-coach battle in the world? Was it actually because that bad in the matter of just twelve months? The answer

is an overwhelming yes," he said. The book also goes behind the scenes of cases like Monkeygate, the suspension of Lalit Modi, spot-fixing, and the phase of judicial intervention. Besides repatriation, the book also features player reminiscences, personal interviews, photographs and letters never known or discussed so far in

Indian sporting discourse. The book also seeks to answer questions like: Has internal bickering impacted the on-field performance of the Indian cricket team? Did some of our icons fail? How did the Indian cricket playing regions and the sport by trying to conceal important factors during the spot fixing investigation? And does it matter to the ordinary fan who heads

the BCCI as long as there is transparency and accountability? Has the time & Schuster India said it will be releasing "Eleven Gods and a Billion Indians" globally. First, in the cricket playing regions and the world, such as the Indian subcontinent, the UK, and Australia, and subsequently, in the US and Canada. (PTI)