

Pandya has turned his career around: Dravid



NEW DELHI, SEP 26 /- Former Indian ODI Rahul Dravid feels young all-rounder Hardik Pandya has turned his career around by playing just as the situations demand in the ongoing series against Australia. Dravid, who was Pandya's coach during an India A tour of Australia last year, hoped that the current India A players are able to emulate Pandya's batting approach. "A good example about Hardik from my perspective is, he's willing to play situations and not just to dominate the game we often speak about. Credit goes completely to him. It's not about playing just the one way you want to play. He's on the sidelines of India A's unofficial Test against New Zealand A in Vijayawada. He's the one who has actually turned his career around. Dravid was quoted as saying by ESPNCricinfo.com. Pandya has become the cynosure of all eyes with his six-hitting prowess demonstrated to good effect in the ongoing five-ODI series against Australia. He has scored two match-winning half-

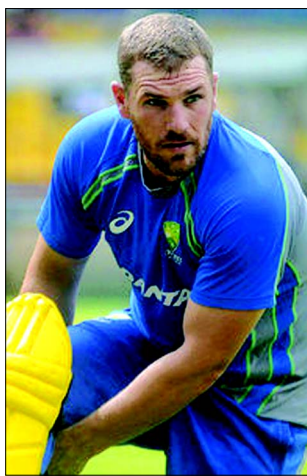
centuries in three games so far. In the first ODI, he along with Mahendra Singh Dhoni had revived India's fortunes with a match-turning 83, while in the third game, where he was sent up to No. 1 after the openers put on a century stand in a chase of 294, Pandya sustained the momentum by scoring 78. "If the bats at four, he bats in a particular way if he bats at six, he bats in a particular way. Tomorrow, he may bat at 80 for 4, like he did in the first ODI with Dhoni. That shows maturity and that's what you want to see. "This concept of 'play your natural game', which I hear all the time, frustrates me because there's no such thing in my beliefs as 'natural game'. It's only about how you play different situations," Dravid, who has been coaching India's U-19 and U-16 teams for over two years now, said. Dravid feels Pandya is a perfect example of how to bat differently in different conditions, and if you can do that like Hardik is showing at the mo-

ment, those would be signs of a developing cricketer, someone who can make consistent contributions and not someone who is a one-off, who can produce brilliance once in a while. "The aspiration and challenges set for a lot of India A players is to be all-weather players, all-situation players, all-condition players," Dravid said. "It's another big hitter who made his international debut earlier this year against England after graduating from the Under-19s in 2016. But his aggression has cut short a few of his promising innings and Dravid, who has worked with Pant for over two years now, stressed on the importance of providing the players with a learning environment. "It's recognition of the fact that someone like Risshabh Pant will always be an attacking player. You don't want to take away his attacking instincts, but you want to inculcate a certain sense of smartness. You have to learn to recognise situations where the time is hot for you to make it count," said Dravid.

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India showing they are a class above : Aaron Finch

NEW DELHI, SEP 26 /- Opening batsman Aaron Finch marked his return to the Australia side with a defeat in the third one-day international against India but the thrill was tempered by another loss for Steve Smith's struggling side. Finch, a member of Australia's 2015 World Cup-winning team, can scarcely remember a tougher run playing for his country in the short format. Australia's five-wicket defeat in Indore on Sunday saw them fall 3-0 behind in the five-match series. The defeat was their 11th in their last 13 ODIs away from home, while the other two matches were rain-affected or resulted in a draw. Finch, who scored 124 in Indore after missing the defeats in Chennai and Kolkata with a calf problem, said Australia had failed to take their chances against India but conceded there was a clear difference between the sides. "You have to play well but I think you also have to go in with the right attitude and make sure that you get an opportunity to win a game, you don't let that slip," Finch said in com-



ments published on Cricket Australia's website (cricket.com.au). "We've been in a couple of good positions in the first few games and as soon as you give India a sniff, they'll beat you nine times out of 10. You have to play 100 percent to beat (India) in these conditions," Finch said. "If you play 90 percent, it's not good enough here. There's obviously a gap between the sides at the moment and they're proving that. "They're 3-0 up, they're the number one side in the world and there's just a few things we need to tinker with as players to bridge that gap and get the results going our way." Australia were whitewashed 5-0 away to South Africa last year and Finch said the mounting losses were not helping with confidence. "Whenever you're losing, it's never easy," said the 30-year-old, who struck his eighth ODI ton in Indore. "Winning away from home is what every side strives to achieve and I think whenever you start losing, you can lose a little bit of confidence in yourself and in the way you're playing."

Tye replaces Cummins in Australia's T20 squad

BENGALURU, Sep 26 /- Australia have recalled pacer Andrew Tye as replacement for Pat Cummins for the three T20 Internationals against India. The team management had earlier decided to rest Cummins for the T20 series ahead of the upcoming series. Cummins has played all three matches in the ODI series so far. Tye, a T20 specialist, has played five matches for Australia and last represented the country in February. Cricket.com.au reported that Tye has replaced Cummins for the series beginning in Ranchi on October 7. The second and third game will be played in Guwahati and Hyderabad on October 10 and 13 respectively. Tye has not played any cricket since dislocation of his right thumb in the Indian Premier League earlier this year. Playing for Gujarat Lions in the T20 league, Tye has a match-winning hat-trick against Pune, unless he suffers the shoulder injury.

We're not afraid of facing tough opponents: Amarjit Singh

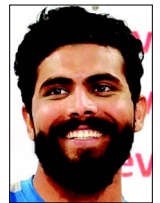
MARGAO, SEP 26 /- India's captain for the FIFA U-17 World Cup Amarjit Singh has said that his players have worked extremely hard in the last couple of years and are not afraid of facing tough opponents in the upcoming tournament starting October 6. "Under the new Portuguese coach Luis Norton de Matos we have learnt a lot of new things. The coaching staff has also helped us to be mentally tough against tough opponents. And now we are not afraid to play against the tough opponents," said Amarjit. India have been placed in Group A in the FIFA U-17 World Cup alongside USA, Colombia and Ghana. The hosts will face USA on October 6, followed by Colombia and Ghana on October 9 and October 12 respectively at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi. "Our plan is to put the best foot forward in the upcoming tournament and play good matches. We have worked really hard and are capable of playing well. We can build good image of our team in the next few weeks during the tournament," said the skipper.

FIFA U-17 WC: Over 20K tickets sold for first match day at DYP

MUMBAI, SEP 26 /- Over 20,000 tickets have been sold for the first match day comprising two matches to be played at the D Y Patil Stadium in neighbouring Navi Mumbai on October 6, day one of the FIFA U17 World Cup. "Over 20,000 tickets have been sold so far out of the total capacity (around 45,000) of the stadium," sources said today. According to sources, they have another 10 days left for the tournament to kick off and a full house for the first two games is expected. They also said the stadium will be handled over to FIFA on Saturday September 26, though a final date for it has to be fixed. Meanwhile, the D Y Patil Stadium has been completely renovated for the FIFA event, to be hosted by India for the first time. As per sources, all the seats have been changed to ensure that spectators get a good view of the games. The seats have been imported from South Korea. "All the new seats are put in. A new fabric roof has been installed and we have made sure the seating is done in such a manner that every spectator, who sits in the stadium, has a unique watching experience," a senior official of D Y Patil Sports Academy recently said. "In terms of renovation, two practise grounds are ready in the facility (campus)," he said. It is learnt that all arrangements are in place for the tournament and some finishing touches are being given. And as per sources in the knowhow, the Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation has agreed to play buses from the stadium to nearby railway stations - Juagar and Nerul - for the convenience of commuters.

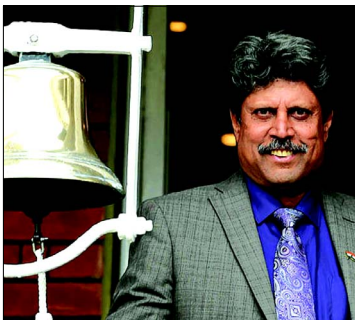
Out of Team India reckoning, Jadeja talks about 'police report' in strange Instagram post

NEW DELHI, SEP 26 /- Hours after he was left out of the Indian squad for the last two matches of the ongoing five-match ODI series against Australia, Ravindra Jadeja shared a rather strange Instagram post, riddled with cryptic messages, on Monday. In the post, the 28-year-old all-rounder cited his "police report" to claim that he had a great night in Mumbai. "The number one ranked Test all-rounder is seen 'smoking', which we can't confirmed though," the Indian selectors on Sunday announced the squad for the remaining two matches, to be played in Bengaluru and Nagpur on Thursday (September 28) and Sunday (October 1). Axar Patel, who was on the sidelines for all three matches played so far due to an ankle injury, returned thus opening the exit doors to Jadeja. The Saurashtra cricketer was called in as Patel's replacement, but never got to play. "It's pertinent to mention that Jadeja and spinners Ravindra Ashwin have been 'rested' from the limited-overs duties and were not selected when the Indian team was announced for the first three matches of the series. Jadeja has played 32 Tests, 136 ODIs and 40 T20Is. India have already taken an unassailable 3-0 lead in the series, giving Virat Kohli & Co the numero spot ODI rankings. However, India will need to win the remaining matches to retain the spot. A defeat at Chinnaswamy against Australia on Thursday can witness the team slipping down to No. 2, behind South Africa.



Kapil Dev's 1983 Cricket WC win gets a Bollywood biopic

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NEW DELHI, SEP 26 /- The trend of biopic on sports persons in Bollywood will continue as cricketer legend Kapil Dev will have a film on his life with the latest news of Kabir Khan directing a biopic on the legendary cricketer. And an actor no less than Ranveer Singh will play the lead role. Kapil is fondly remembered as India's finest all-rounder and arguably the greatest cricketer the country has produced. He was also named the Wisden Indian Cricketer of the Century at the turn of the millennium. The film will chronicle India's 1983 Cricket World Cup win under Dev's captainship, when the Men in Blue defeated West Indies in the final to clinch their first-ever World Cup trophy. The movie will reportedly be backed by Phantom films, co-owned by filmmakers Anurag Kashyap, Vikas Bahl, Vikramaditya Motwane and Madhu Mantona. With what is being touted as the "biggest sports film", Kabir is venturing into fairly new genre, whose credits include political-drama thrillers like "New York", "Bajranghi Bhajjan", the most recent "Tubelight", among others. Apart from this, the filmmaker is also set to helm a web series based on freedom fighter Subhas Chandra Bose's Indian National Army for Amazon Prime Video. Ranveer, meanwhile, is gearing up for the release of his next, "Padmavati".

Brazil eyeing to reclaim U-17 WC title at majestic Saltlake

KOLKATA, SEP 26 /- Brazil Under-17 football team coach Carlos Amadeu wants to reclaim the FIFA U-17 World Cup title after a hiatus of 14 years at the majestic Saltlake Stadium on October 28. Having visited India and the revamped Saltlake Stadium during the World Cup draw, Amadeu said he dreams of lifting the glittering silverware here. "I've heard about the football madness in Kolkata and I've been there. It is a huge stadium with a beautiful history. Since I was there I'm dreaming about the final. I wish we could get the trophy there," Amadeu told PTI in an exclusive interview after arriving in Mumbai on Tuesday. The U-17 World Cup title has eluded Brazil since 2003. Having

won the title thrice in the past, the South American country is just behind title holders and four-time champions Nigeria, who have failed to qualify for the upcoming edition. Having done a solid job in the youth ranks at Victoria, Amadeu took charge of the Brazil U-17 side in May 2015 in the lead-up to the U-17 World Cup in Chile that year, where he steered the team to the last-eight before being eliminated by eventual champions Nigeria. "I think that if you get the statistics of the U-17 World Cup, Africa are in front of South America and Europe. One of their countries always reach semi-finals," he said. But Amadeu feels the competition will be tough this time around. "The European teams,

USA and Mexico are really strong this year. There are too many teams fighting for the title," he said. Talking about Indian football, Amadeu had some words of advice for the host nation and said they can benefit from a football powerhouse like Brazil by way of exchange programmes. "Players from India could build a beautiful history in football," he said. "My advice is to watch closely countries like Brazil, who can bring programmes with know-how. Also, the Indian professional players travel around the world and participate in exchange pro-



Brazil U-17 World Cup football at Mumbai Airport.

grammes," he added. The 52-year-old has put in well-designed training sessions for the last two years, the result of which was evident in their dominant performance in the U-17 South America Cup in Chamela in March. Latest Brazilian teenage sensation Vinicius Junior was the leading goal scorer (7) and the player to score the most goals in seven of their matches and drew the other two en route to the title. Brazil kept a clean slate in seven of their nine matches and scored more goals than any other side (24), while conceding fewer (three). With his club Flamengo playing the final of the Copa do Brasil on September 27, Vinicius Jr will join the team later this month.

"It's the result of hard work, two years of preparation and a well-designed philosophy," he said. "This has been our goal since we started to work for the national team. I hope we can continue playing this type of football and being competitive as well, though it's not easy as other teams are studying us," he said. Brazil will spend a week in Mumbai before landing in Kochi where they open their campaign against Spain in a mouth-watering group D contest on October 7. Brazil will have a bye in group D and will play one group league against Niger in Goa. "I've been in Goa for the BRICS Cup in 2006 and I went to Kochi after the World Cup draw," he signed off.