

Aussies may not play in ODI tourneys abroad

SYDNEY, Apr 21: The Australian Cricket Board (ACB) was waiting on the outcome of an international meeting next month before deciding whether to sacrifice future one-day tournaments overseas following the Hansie Cronje betting furore, reports AFP.

ACB chief executive Malcolm Speed said Friday the board would wait until after the emergency meeting of the International Cricket Council before deciding on its response to the scandal.

But Australian sports bookmakers were already insisting they would tread warily in future overseas tournaments after Cronje plunged the sport into crisis.

The disgraced South African captain admitted last week he received money in exchange for information on matches, sparking investigations and a rush of rumours of other corrupt players.

The rumours largely surround one-day matches on the subcontinent and in Sharjah.

Australia have not played in the Sharjah tournament for two years, but they will play in an ICC-sanctioned tournament in Nairobi later this year.

Speed said the ACB had not discussed Australia's future scheduling and would wait until after the May 2-3 meeting in London.

"We'll listen to what is spoken about at the ICC meeting and maybe make a decision after that," Speed said.

"We don't go to a lot of these tournaments anyway and we haven't thought about that particular issue in great detail."

Australia last played in Sharjah in April 1998 in a tri-nations tournament, which has already come under the spotlight.

Former Indian cricket boss Inderjit Singh Bindra questioned a match between India and New Zealand at the tournament, claiming a Pakistan official told him how the match would unfold.

Sirajganj cricket

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Apr 21: Runners Club Ekadash beat Masimpur Kira Chakra Ekadash by 28 runs at the Shaheed Shamsuddin Stadium today.

Winning the toss, Runners Club decided to bat first and made 159 runs for four wickets in the stipulated 25 overs.

In reply, Masimpur collected 131 runs losing eight wickets in 25 overs.

On Thursday, Ullapara Showkin Cricket Club beat Raiganj Upazilla Cricket Club by 5 wickets at the same venue.

Winning the toss, Raiganj batted first and collected 113 runs losing all the wickets in 34 overs.

In reply, Ullapara made 119 losing 5 wickets in 18.5 overs. Rashid of Ullapara was adjudged man-of-the-match.

Kournikova crashes out

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, South Carolina, Apr 20: Anna Kournikova's trip to the Family Circle Cup ended like a lot of her tennis tournaments — with an early exit and a lot of questions.

Kournikova, seeded sixth in an event Martina Hingis, Lindsay Davenport and both Venus and Serena Williams chose to skip, fell to 11th-seeded Ruxandra Dragomir on Thursday, 3-6, 7-5, 6-3.

Kournikova flew through the draw here a year ago before falling to Hingis in the final. But she could not find a way to get to the third round this time.

"Every loss is disappointment," she said. "I think I got a bit tired at the end of the match, and I wasn't as patient."

Those waiting for Kournikova to break through and live up to her potential are also losing patience. How long will it be before she wins on the WTA Tour?

"I just started," she said with as much sass as she could muster. "I have maybe 10 years more. I think I'll accomplish something."

While Kournikova is finished, the top four seeds — Mary Pierce, Conchita Martinez, Monica Seles and Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario — all moved into the quarterfinals.

Seles, seeded third, had the most trouble, but survived a third-set tiebreaker to beat No 9 Elena Likhovtseva 6-4, 2-6, 7-6 (5).

Seles, who won the season's first clay-court tournament at Amelia Island, Florida, last week, continued her strong play against Likhovtseva, who ousted Seles here when Likhovtseva rolled through the second set and led 6-5 in the third.

The seven-time Grand Slam champion nailed a 103 mph ace and zipped a forehand past Likhovtseva to force the tiebreaker.

Seles was defeated in third-set tiebreakers at Sea Pines Racquet Club in the 1997 final by Hingis and the 1998 semifinals by Irina Spilrea. Seles trailed 2-0 in this one.

With the packed crowd urging her on, Seles hit a backhand winner to take her first lead, 4-3. Likhovtseva saved two match points before pushing a forehand wide, and Seles was spared another close defeat.

"I was really frustrated with my serve, and it just let me down a lot in the match," said Seles, who will next face Dragomir. "I let Elena come back tons of times, and here I said, 'This is happening in the tiebreak.' I was lucky she just missed that shot on match point."

Umpire Akhtar says it's base

PCB rejects

KARACHI, Apr 21: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Friday rejected match-fixing charges levelled by South

African board chief Ali Bacher, saying the accusations were unacceptable unless backed by concrete evidence, reports AFP.

The charges about Pakistan's World Cup match against Bangladesh are baseless, full of contradiction and lack credibility, PCB manager Yawar Saeed said in a statement from Lahore.

The managing director of the United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCBSA) Ali Bacher Thursday told Australian newspapers that two of the 1999 World Cup matches, one in which minnows Bangladesh upset formidable Pakistan, were fixed.

Bacher also expressed suspicions about Pakistani umpire Javed Akhtar over his handling of the Leeds Test during South Africa's 1998 tour of England.

Umpire Akhtar has also refuted allegations of involvement in any wrongdoings.

"It was amazing that Bacher has remained silent on this issue for nearly one year and now suddenly comes out with these allegations," Saeed said.

The Pandora's box of match-fixing and betting reopened on April 4 when South African captain Hansie Cronje and three fellow players were charged by Indian police with involvement in match-fixing during the one day series against India last month.

"It is disappointing Bacher has chosen to go with these allegations rather than sharing the information with the PCB or International Cricket Council (ICC) code of conduct," Saeed said.

Bangladesh Cricket president Saber Chowdhury Friday said board will officially Pakistan lost the 1999 match against Bangladesh by 62 runs at Northanger winning their matches.

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Hansie hearing

NEW DELHI, Apr 21: Indian police said Friday they were in no hurry to launch the formal prosecution of disgraced South African skipper Hansie Cronje and Indian bookmakers for match-fixing, reports AFP.

Delhi Police Crime Branch chief Pradeep Srivastava told this news agency that formal legal proceedings against those charged in the match-fixing case, including Cronje and three of his teammates, would begin this summer.

"It will be two to three months before we start the prosecutions," Srivastava said. "We are in no hurry."

It was Srivastava who broke news of the scandal with his shock announcement April 7 that Delhi police had filed initial charges against Cronje, Herschelle Gibbs, Nicky Boje and Pieter Strydom for match-fixing.

"Right now we are going to the High Court on April 25 against the anticipatory bail being sought," the crime branch chief said of bookmaker Rajesh Kalra and former film actor Kishan Kumar arrested in the case.

The Indian judiciary permits a suspect to obtain bail from a court in advance to avoid

detention by the police.

Police sources, however, the delay in launch prosecutions was due to the crime branch plan to launch London-based businessman Sanjay Singhania as the main suspect in the fixing case.

The police furnished scripts of purported conversations between Cronje and Chawla before the five matches in last South Africa-India series.

"We are still awaiting from Interpol," a high source said of a Delhi request to the global agency to provide samples of Chawla's voices.

Other sources, however, said the police had urged Indian foreign ministry to get Chawla's passport, 1997, in a bid to pin him in Britain, where he lives.

"If he manages to get out of Britain then we would restart the whole exercise again," the source said.

India and Britain are by an extradition treaty.

The four South African cricketers, bookie Kumar and based Chawla have charged with criminal

disclosure of the name of the public and also Chandrachud probe.

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Chandrachud said he had no evidence to indict any Indian player or official in match-fixing.

He dismissed Prabhakar's allegations against unnamed teammates as "imaginary and unrealistic".

The Delhi High Court has been petitioned jointly by Shantanu Sharma and his friend Rahul Mehra, a lawyer.

Sharma told this news agency by telephone: "We want the entire set-up to be changed. There has to be a level of transparency."

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District Cricket Association (DDCA), the petitioners said in a statement.

The petitioner, Subhas Datta, told Reuters the court had admitted the petition which said that CBI was better equipped to probe the affair than the Delhi police.

India became a focus in the cricket corruption controversy earlier this month when Delhi police charged South Africans Hansie Cronje, Pieter Strydom, Nicky Boje and Herschelle Gibbs with match-fixing during a one-day series between India and South Africa last month.

The players have denied the accusations.

However, Cronje was subsequently sacked as captain after admitting he took between 10,000 and 15,000 dollars from a bookmaker for information and forecasting during a triangular one-day series against Zimbabwe and England in South Africa last January.

spite political tensions between the South Asian rivals.

This proves the nobleness of the game, which will not be tainted because of the wrongdoings of a few people," Dalmiya said.

Rajshahi soccer

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAH, Apr 21: Rajshahi First Division football super league began at the Rajshahi District Stadium today.

The newcomer Kadirganj Sporting Club trounced the last year's champions Abahani Kira Chakra 8-0.

Tapash scored hat-trick Anu, Nayan, Kamal, Saidur and Bara Babu made one goal each.

Rajshahi District Sports Association president and Deputy Commissioner of Rajshahi formally inaugurated the league.

to their ultra-defensive weekend at the Benson Hedges Cup.

Needing two from the last ball to tie and earn a win for Notts, by virtue of losing fewer wickets, Paul Franks swung and missed at a straight ball from Neil Killeen and lost his off stump.

It proved to be a great finish in a game where the visitors having made 174 for eight at more than a run a ball in a match shortened to 28 overs per side, looked to be out of reach.

Katich, who scored just a single in each of his three previous innings, took just 53 balls to make his 50 and hit six fours along the way.

After acknowledging the ap-

proach and Melvyn betts.

A Notts batting collapse looked on the cards when openers Usman Afzaal then John Morris were both out in the first two overs leaving Notts reeling at six for two.

But skipper Jason Gallian and Bicknell steadied the ship, adding 98 for the third wicket before Gallian was bowled by Steve Harmison.

The Notts captain was dropped three times on the way to his 47 as he took necessary chances to try and get the scoreboard moving.

Bicknell, however, carried on regardless and reached his half century off 61 balls by planting Harmison out of the ground for six over mid-wicket.

visitors' 218 for six with one over of their quota of 50 to spare.

The win takes Derbyshire to the top of the North Group with five points, one ahead of Yorkshire, third placed Lancashire and fourth placed Durham.

Derbyshire made light work of the early loss of Australian Michael Di Venuto as Matthew Downman (65) and Matthew Casar (43) shared a century stand for the second wicket.

Lancashire's innings was dominated by England all-rounder Andy Flintoff (70) after they lost John Crawley, Michael Atherton and Indian captain Saurav Ganguly with just 33 on the board.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Mead study area

6 Dr. Salk

11 Reaping prelim

12 Off the slate

14 Apt

15 Hawaiian woman

16 Vex

17 Mountain air

19 —

20 Requisite

22 Quantitative suffix

23 Sheep shed

24 Columbian place

26 Toni Morrison book

28 Einstein's birthplace

30 Cartoonist Chast

31 Unusual

35 Denominations

39 "Fancy Pants" trumpeter

DOWN

1 Evening out of context?

2 Blow reveille

3 Playing marble

4 Sans siblings

5 —

6 Rock artist?

7 Exam format

8 Slang refusal

9 "I, Robot" author

10 Thurmond's domain

11 David's weapon

13 Took out of context?

18 Fix the sound track

21 Question

23 Deceive

25 Pub order

27 Acapulco

29 "The Falcon"

31 "My Friend Flicka" writer

32 Manager's chore

33 Icebox, today

34 1773

36 Making do

37 Appealing to Yuppies

38 Squeals to the