

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 Ekadosh beat Masimpur Krira Chakra Ekadosh 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 118 runs losing all the wickets in 34 overs.

In reply, Ullapara made 119 losing 5 wickets in 18.5 overs. Result 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 Ruxanda Dragomir on Thursday, 3-6, 7-5.

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 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 Spirle. 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 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 to me 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 A



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 wrongdoing.

"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.



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Saeed said PCB

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