

NZ spots up for grabs

REUTERS/AFP, Adelaide

Captain Stephen Fleming has challenged his fringe seam bowlers to earn their places in New Zealand's attack for next week's second Test against Australia.

New Zealand, who almost snatched an unlikely victory in the drawn first Test in Brisbane, play South Australia in a four-day tour match starting in Adelaide on Friday.

Fleming, right-hand batsman Nathan Astle and all-rounder Chris Cairns, who has only returned to the side this month after a year-long knee injury, will be rested ahead of the second Test starting in Hobart, Tasmania on November 22.

The influential Cairns pulled up sore from his last-day heroics, which took New Zealand within 10 runs of a famous Test victory in Brisbane last Monday.

Seamers Chris Martin, who has played seven Tests, and the uncapped Shane Bond will be given every opportunity to press their claims for Test selection.

Both were named on Thursday in the team to play South Australia. Craig McMillan will captain the side.

Bond, 26, arrived here earlier this week as a replacement for Dion Nash, who was sent home after the drawing of the first Brisbane Test with an stomach injury. Left-arm seamer Shayne O'Connor is another casualty from the first Test and is battling a knee injury.

New Zealand coach Denis Aberhart said Martin, Bond and Daryl Tuffey, who also missed out on a place in the first Test team, were competing for one or possibly two spots.

Aberhart said opening batsman Mark Richardson had recovered from a hamstring injury suffered in the first Test. Fleming said left-arm finger spinner Daniel Vettori would benefit from playing against South Australia.

Vettori and fellow spinner Glen Sulzberger spent the past few days working here with former Australian Test off-spinner Ashley Mallett.

NEW ZEALAND: Craig McMillan (captain), Matthew Bell, Shane Bond, Chris Martin, Adam Parore, Mark Richardson, Mathew Sinclair, Glen Sulzberger, Daryl Tuffey, Daniel Vettori, Lou Vincent, Nathan Astle (12th man).

SOUTH AUSTRALIA: Darren Lehmann (captain), Greg Blewett, David Fitzgerald, Shane Deitz, Chris Davies, Ben Higgins, Brad Young, Graham Manou, Mike Smith, Peter McIntyre, Paul Rofe, Mark Harrity, (12th man to be named).

Kiwi-Lankan opener Jr World Cup schedule released



AFP, New Delhi

Hosts New Zealand will clash with Sri Lanka in the opening match of the Junior Cricket World Cup in January next year, the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced on Thursday.

The tournament, featuring under-19 teams from 16 countries, will be played across New Zealand from January 19 and end with the final at the Bert Sutcliffe Oval in Lincoln on February 10.

The 16 teams, ranging from the 10 Test-playing nations to unlikely contenders like Nepal and Papua New Guinea, have been divided into four preliminary groups.

The top two from each group will play in the super-league which will throw up the four semi-finalists.

Defending champions India, who won the title at the 2000 event in Sri Lanka, have been drawn with South Africa, Bangladesh and Canada in Group A.

Group B comprises Sri Lanka, New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Pakistan, England, Nepal and Papua New Guinea are in Group C, while Group D is made of Australia, West Indies, Scotland, Kenya.

Group A matches will be played at the Bert Sutcliffe Oval in Lincoln.

Group B matches will be played at the Bert Sutcliffe Oval in Lincoln.

Group C matches will be played at the Bert Sutcliffe Oval in Lincoln.

Group D matches will be played at the Bert Sutcliffe Oval in Lincoln.

Sri Lanka's Ranjan Madugalle has been appointed head of the new international panel of referees, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said in a statement.

The ICC said his first task will be to identify candidates for the remaining four positions on the new panel, which will be set up alongside a similar elite panel of umpires.

Ranjan is a highly experienced and respected individual who has earned the right to take the lead role at the head of the new referees panel," said ICC chief executive officer Malcolm Speed.

Short-listed nominees identified by Madugalle will be interviewed and appointed by Speed and Sunil Gavaskar and take up their duties in April next year.

Madugalle played 21 tests and 65 one-day internationals between 1979 and 1989, for the last two years as captain of his country.

He was appointed to the ICC referees panel in 1994 and has officiated in 35 Tests and 101 one days, including the 1999 World Cup final and the ICC Knock Out finals of 1998 and 2000.

in Auckland, Groups B and C in Christchurch and group D in Dunedin.

This is the third junior World Cup organised by the ICC, following the previous two in South Africa in 1998 and Sri Lanka last year.

"Bringing together the most talented and gifted cricketers for this under-19 World Cup is tremendously exciting, and something the ICC is very proud to be associated with," ICC president Malcolm Gray said in a press release.

"As a stepping stone to the senior international game, this tournament provides a wonderful opportunity for the cricketers who will gather in New Zealand.

"There can be few, if any, better experiences for young sportsmen than being selected to represent their countries in an event of this stature and importance," the release quoted Gray as saying.

Said in a press release. "As a stepping stone to the senior international game, this tournament provides a wonderful opportunity for the cricketers who will gather in New Zealand.

SCHEDULE

Schedule of the Junior Under-19 Cricket World Cup in New Zealand early next year, released by the International Cricket Council on Thursday.

Preliminary groups Group A at Auckland: India, South Africa, Bangladesh, Canada Group B at Christchurch: Sri Lanka, New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Namibia Group C at Christchurch: Pakistan, England, Nepal, Papua New Guinea Group D at Dunedin: Australia, West Indies, Scotland, Kenya

Jan 14: Opening Ceremony/Meeting with Officials New Zealand v Sri Lanka at Lincoln

Jan 19: Bangladesh v South Africa at Auckland West Indies v Namibia at Lincoln

Jan 20: Pakistan v Papua New Guinea at Lincoln Australia v Kenya at Dunedin

Jan 21: India v Canada at Auckland New Zealand v Zimbabwe at Lincoln

Jan 22: England v Nepal at Lincoln West Indies v Scotland at Carisbrook, Dunedin

Jan 23: Bangladesh v Canada at Auckland Sri Lanka v Namibia at Lincoln

Jan 24: Pakistan v Nepal at Lincoln Scotland v Kenya at Dunedin

Jan 25: India v South Africa at Auckland New Zealand v Namibia at Christchurch

Jan 26: England v Papua New Guinea at Lincoln Australia v West Indies at Dunedin

Jan 27: India v Bangladesh at Auckland Sri Lanka v Zimbabwe at Christchurch

Jan 28: West Indies v Kenya at Dunedin South Africa v Canada at Auckland

Jan 29: Pakistan v England at Lincoln Nepal v Papua New Guinea at Hagley Oval

Jan 30: Australia v Scotland at Dunedin

(Top two teams from each of the four groups will qualify for the Super League and will play on a league basis in two groups at Lincoln, Christchurch)

Super League 1: (SL1): A1, B2, C1, D2 Super League 2: (SL2): A2, B1, C2, D1

Jan 27: 1A v 2D at Bert Sutcliffe Oval, Lincoln 1C v 2B at Lincoln No. 3, Lincoln

Jan 28: 3B v 4D at Eden Park No. 2, Auckland 1D v 2A at Bert Sutcliffe Oval, Lincoln

Jan 29: 1B v 2C at Lincoln No. 3, Lincoln 3D v 4B at Eden Park No. 2, Auckland

Jan 30: 1A v 2B at Bert Sutcliffe Oval, Lincoln 1C v 2D at Lincoln Green, Lincoln

Jan 31: 3B v 4C at Melville Park, Auckland 1B v 2A at Lincoln Green, Lincoln

Feb 1: 1D v 2C at Hagley Oval, Christchurch 3D v 4A at Melville Park, Auckland

Feb 2: 1A v 1C at Lincoln Green, Lincoln 2B v 2D at Hagley Oval, Christchurch

Feb 3: 4C v 4D at Colin Maiden Park No. 2, Auckland 1B v 1D at Hagley Oval, Christchurch

Feb 4: 2A v 2C at Lincoln Green, Lincoln 4A v 4B at Colin Maiden No. 2, Auckland

Feb 5: Semifinal: Winner SL1 v Runner Up SL2 at Lincoln Semifinal: Winner SL2 v Runner Up SL1 at Lincoln

Feb 6: Final at Bert Sutcliffe Oval, Lincoln Reserve day

Feb 7: Reserve day

Feb 8: Reserve day

Feb 9: Reserve day

Feb 10: Reserve day

Feb 11: Reserve day

Feb 12: Reserve day

Feb 13: Reserve day

Feb 14: Reserve day

Feb 15: Reserve day

Feb 16: Reserve day

Feb 17: Reserve day

Feb 18: Reserve day

Feb 19: Reserve day

Feb 20: Reserve day

Feb 21: Reserve day

Feb 22: Reserve day

Feb 23: Reserve day

Feb 24: Reserve day

Feb 25: Reserve day

Feb 26: Reserve day

Feb 27: Reserve day

Feb 28: Reserve day

Feb 29: Reserve day

Feb 30: Reserve day

Mar 1: Reserve day

Mar 2: Reserve day

Mar 3: Reserve day

Delta Life h'ball S'nahar Hall retain title

SPORTS REPORTER

Shamsunnahar Hall of Dhaka University on Thursday won the Seventh Delta Life Girls' Handball Tournament for the fifth successive year.

They edged past Viquarunnissa Noon College 11-7 in the final at the Dhanmondi Sultana Kamal Women's Sports Complex.

Fisheries and Livestock Minister Sadek Hossain later gave away prizes among the winners.

Army athletics concludes

PRESS RELEASE, Dhaka

The annual Athletics Championship of the Bangladesh Army ended yesterday at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Savar Area clinched the title with eight gold, seven silver and four bronze medals while Chittagong Area followed them with four gold, five silver and eight bronze medals.

Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen M Harun-Ar-Rashid witnessed the concluding day's events and distributed prizes.

Nitol-Tata soccer

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Red Lion Club of Jaipur had advanced to the next round of the Nitol-Tata National Football League beating Agra Shekha of Lalmonirhat 5-3 in the tiebreaker at the local stadium yesterday.

The match locked in 2-2 in the stipulated time.

Akhtar's action ICC turns down PCB's request

REUTERS, London

Pakistan pace bowler Shoaib Akhtar will not be treated as a special case after being reported for a suspect bowling action at a recent tournament, the International Cricket Council (ICC) has said.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) director Brigadier Munawar Rana had sent a personal letter to the ICC asking for any inquiry into Shoaib's bowling action to be dealt with by a special sub-committee of the organisation's cricket committee.

But ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed's reply says: "Having discussed your request with the ICC president, I am unable to agree to treat this as a special case outside the carefully established process to deal with matters of this kind."

Speed's letter was made public on the PCB's website.

Shoaib, 26, was reported for the first time since December 1999 after the recent triangular Champions' Trophy in Sharjah.

Rana told this news agency earlier this week that the problem for Shoaib, one of the world's fastest bowlers known as the "Rawalpindi Express", lies in his "peculiar physiology".

He said Shoaib had been put through stage one of the ICC bowling action review process and experts had declared that he did not throw the ball but had a physiological problem of hyper-mobility in the joints of his bowling arm.

But Speed's letter emphasised that the original ICC process for dealing with bowlers with suspect actions was changed -- largely because the PCB was unhappy with it -- after Shoaib was first reported and suspended in Australia in 1999.

S'kara shines

FROM PAGE 13

beat a direct throw from Marlon Samuels while attempting a risky single.

Atapattu was the lone batsman to be dismissed in the morning session.

The Sri Lankan opener, 46 overnight, completed his half-century before being caught by Brian Lara off leg-spinner Dinanath Ramnarine for 61.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the third day of the first Test between Sri Lanka and the West Indies on Thursday:

WEST INDIES: First innings 448 (B Lara 178, R Sarwan 88, C Hooper 69, D Ganga 47; M Muralitharan 6-126, C Vaas 4-95)

SRI LANKA: First innings (over-night 103-1) Atapattu c Lara b Ramnarine 61 Jayasuriya c McGarrell b Dillon 25 Sangakkara not out 126 Jayawardene run out 99 Arnold not out 18 Extras: (lb-8, w-2, nb-4) 14 Total: (For 3 wks 110 overs) 343

Fall of wickets: 1-37, 2-146, 3-308 To bat: Hashan Tillakaratne, Thilan Samaraweera, Chaminda Vaas, Niroshan Bandaratilleke, Charitha Buddhika, Muttiah Muralitharan

Bowler O M R W Dillon 30 7 83 1 Stuart 20 2 91 0 McGarrell 16 2 47 0 Ramnarine 29 7 75 1 Hooper 14 2 34 0 Samuels 1 0 5 0

Umpires: John Hampshire (England) and Peter Manuel (Sri Lanka).

Saurav may open for India



REUTERS/AFP, Port Elizabeth

India, who have never won a Test match in South Africa, face important selection decisions for the second Test starting at the St George's Park in Port Elizabeth on Friday.

The visitors, who lost the first game of the three-Test series by nine wickets in Bloemfontein, must decide whether to field three seamers or two spinners.

They also have to settle on an opening pair as they bid to stay in the series by winning their first Test in nine played on South African soil.

Captain Saurav Ganguly may take on the problematic opening batsman role as India need to find a way of stopping the South Africans from making an early breakthrough.

Rahul Dravid volunteered to open in Bloemfontein but made only two and 11. He is expected to drop back into the middle-order here.

Uncapped left-hander Connor Williams joined the tour as a specialist opening batsman and it was expected he would partner Shiv Das in the Tests.

But because both India's first-class matches outside the Tests were abandoned because of wet outfields without a ball bowled, Williams has not had a chance to play.

Williams is not expected to be thrown in without having had a chance to get used to South African conditions. In any event, India would have a problem omitting one of their middle order players.

Ganguly, Sachin Tendulkar, Dravid and Venkatesh Laxman are all automatic choices, while Virender Sehwag took full advantage of his selection in Bloemfontein by making a century on his Test debut.

With none of the other batsmen believed to be keen to tackle the

new ball, Ganguly seemed the most likely solution. The left-hander has enjoyed success as an opener in one-day internationals but has not looked comfortable against the Test rising ball on lively pitches at Test level.

The home side are unlikely to change their triumphant line-up



SAURAV GANGULY

from Bloemfontein, despite naming the in-form batsman Jacques Rudolph in their 12.

On the bowling front, India's choice would seem to lie between picking both off-spinner Harbhajan Singh and leg-spinner Anil Kumble, or to stick only with Harbhajan.

Harbhajan has recovered from a groin infection.

After the Indians completed a net practice at St George's Park, rain started to fall and the South Africans had to settle for a lower intensity work-out in an indoor net.

South African coach Graham Ford said his team was not concerned about facing for the first time in a Test the match-winning Harbhajan, who has taken 65 wickets in 16 games.

"We've seen him (Harbhajan) in the one-dayers, and we've got video footage on him," Ford told reporters on Thursday. "So we've got a reasonable idea of what he's about."

"But we have handled quality

spinners reasonably well. So I don't think the guys are particularly fazed. Whoever plays, they are going to have some quality bowlers who are all capable of doing the job. We've just got to be able to adjust on the day."

The South African coach, meanwhile, relished the prospect of his team's superior pace attack exploiting a potentially responsive pitch.

"We feel that we like to play on pitches that have pace and bounce," Ford said. "Those are the Tests that go forward quickly, and there's lots of action and it's exciting. I think that's what cricket needs right now."

"It looks as though this pitch will give us that, but I suppose the weather could play its part depending on how much sunshine we get before the match."

Ford sang the praises of uncapped opener Rudolph, who has scored three centuries in four matches in South Africa's domestic first-class competition as well as another century against the touring Indians in the opening match of their tour.

"He's played brilliantly and he deserves to be part of the set up," Ford said.

TEAMS SOUTH AFRICA (from): Shaun Pollock (captain), Gary Kirsten, Herschelle Gibbs, Jacques Kallis, Neil McKenzie, Boeta Dippenaar, Lance Klusener, Mark Boucher, Nicky Boje, Moranttau Hayward, Makhaya Ntini, Jacques Rudolph.

INDIA (from): Saurav Ganguly (captain), Rahul Dravid, Shiv Das, Connor Williams, Sachin Tendulkar, Venkatesh Laxman, Virender Sehwag, Sameer Dighe, Deep Dasgupta, Harbhajan Singh, Anil Kumble, Ajit Agarkar, Venkatesh Prasad, Zaheer Khan, Ashish Nehra, Javagal Srinath.

Umpires: Ian Howell (South Africa) and Russell Tiffin (Zimbabwe).

It's Sachin not security



REUTERS/AFP, Bombay

England captain Nasser Hussain has shrugged off security concerns and said his inexperienced squad would be concentrating on playing matters during their tour of India.

"All we are worried about is the cricket," Hussain said a day after the England players arrived on the sub-continent. "We have got no worries at the moment apart from (Indian batsman Sachin) Tendulkar."

"We are not worried at all about

the security," Hussain said. "Hopefully, we can ease off the security after some time."

The 16 England players, none of whom have played a Test match in India, arrived on Wednesday for the three Tests in December and, after returning home for Christmas, a five-match one-day international series in January.

Only Hussain among the touring party has played an international match in India before - his one-day debut during the Nehru Cup in 1989.

Hussain, with 63 Tests, and Graeme Thorpe with 69, are veteran batsmen, but seven players have played less than 20 Tests and four

none at all. Bowlers Andrew Caddick and Robert Croft pulled out of the tour because of safety concerns following September's attacks on the United States and the ongoing political situation in Afghanistan.

The retirement of former captain Michael Atherton and the non-availability of senior pros like Alec Stewart, Gough and Caddick have made the current squad one of England's most inexperienced ever.

England, touring India for the first time in eight years, have a settled batting order, but their bowling has been severely weakened by the absence of Gough and Caddick as well as off-spinner Croft.

Hussain thinks England's biggest challenge, apart from dismissing the prolific Tendulkar, will come from seasoned leg-spinner Anil Kumble and off-spinner Harbhajan Singh.

England hope to take in the heat and humidity during three days of nets in this western metropolis, before playing against a Bombay President's XI in the two-day tour opener at the Wankhede Stadium on Sunday.

Hussain, born in Madras before migrating to England with his family when he was five, said the Indian tour would toughen his players.

England have two three-day matches at Hyderabad and Jaipur to prepare for the first Test, which starts in the northern town of Mohali on December 3.

The second Test will be played in Ahmedabad from December 11 and the third in Bangalore from December 19.



England captain Nasser Hussain practises in the nets at the Wankhede Stadium in Bombay yesterday.

Div I Chess

FROM PAGE 13 Grand Master recently. And like every year a few chess players from India and Pakistan are expected to take part.

Mercantile Bank, the sponsors of the League this year, will be offering prize-money among the winners.

BFF hopes

FROM PAGE 13 He refused to comment on Bangladesh's chances of obtaining the grant.

"First let me see the state of the venues and the existing set-up of the BFF. Already I have begun by study and I will let you know before I leave," Fernando remarked.

He will address a press briefing prior to his departure on November 17.

While talking about football in South Asia and Sri Lanka in general, he claimed that football in his country was still more popular than cricket.

"One-day cricket is popular in Sri Lanka. But our local football enjoys higher popularity than local cricket," commented Fernando, who is accompanied by his wife.

It's curtains for Kuerten



AFP, Sydney

Yevgeny Kafelnikov locked up a semifinal spot and in turn dumped defending champion Gustavo Kuerten from the Masters Cup here Thursday.

The Russian fifth seed was too methodical for the erratic Wimbledon champion Goran Ivanisevic, winning 6-3, 6-4, in one hour six minutes to remain unbeaten in the year-ending Masters tournament.

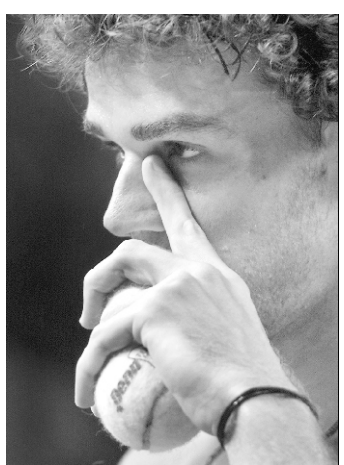
Kafelnikov's victory effectively ended Kuerten's hopes of defending his Masters crown won last year in Lisbon and more than likely snuffed out his chances of finishing the season as world No. 1.

Earlier, Kuerten slumped to a straight sets defeat against Spain's Juan Carlos Ferrero, 7-6, 6-2 to remain win-less after two round-robin matches in the Ken Rosewall Group.

Kuerten leads Australian Lleyton

Hewitt by eight points in the race to finish 2001 as the top-ranked player and with 20 points on offer for a round-robin victory, Hewitt could supplant Kuerten as No.1 after Friday's matches.

Hewitt, unbeaten in the other John Newcombe Group, is already through to the semifinals and plays



GUSTAVO KUERTEN

injured compatriot Patrick Rafter on Friday in his remaining round-robin encounter.

Ivanisevic and Ferrero will play off Friday for the other semifinal position.

Kafelnikov played immaculately in the opening set, not committing an unforced error and winning all his net approaches as Ivanisevic, who qualified for the top-eight tournament on the basis of his Wimbledon grand slam win last July, ran hot and cold.

The Russian broke Ivanisevic in the eighth game of the first set and again in the fifth game of the second set to win only his fifth match in 15 match-ups