

Pak inquiry seeks time

REUTERS, Karachi
The World Cup inquiry commission in Pakistan has asked for an extension of one month from the government to wind up its probe and submit its report.

The commission, headed by Justice Karamat Bhandari of the Lahore High Court, has been investigating since September allegations that Pakistan played fixed matches against Bangladesh and India in the last World Cup in England.

"The commission has asked for an extension up to January 31 to complete its work and report," legal adviser Asghar Haider told Reuters. "It is still hopeful of getting a response from Dr Ali Bacher, who first made the allegations of the matches being fixed," said Haider, who is representing the Pakistan cricket board in the inquiry.

New BBF body formed

BSS, Dhaka

National Sports Council (NSC) yesterday reconstituted the executive committee of Bangladesh Basketball Federation (BBF) with Major General (retd) Z A Khan as president and Selim Chowdhury as general secretary.

The other officials and members of the 25-member committee are: Vice presidents: Major (retd) Kazi Ashfaq Ahmed, Moinul Anshon Monju, Tareq Iqbal Khan Mojish and M Shahidullah Azim.

Joint secretaries: Lt. Commander A K Sarkar and S M Mamoon, Treasurer -- Sheikh Sajedullah Saju.

Members: Syed Ahmed, Tauhidul Islam, Wasif Ali, Kamran Haider, Luthfur Rahman, Syed Aklas Hossain, Abdul Gafar Rubel, Fazle Rehan, S K Fariduddin Manik, Niaz-i-Mowla and representatives of Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Air Force, Bangladesh Rifles, Bangladesh Police, Dhaka University and NSC.

Mazharul, Halim

Table with 5 columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Includes names like Awlad lbw b Mosaddek, Shaheen not out, Extras, Total, and individual bowler stats.

Ahsanullah sends

Table with 5 columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Includes names like Aminuljr, Sumon, Ripon, Mustadir, Mostakim, Nayana, and individual bowler stats.

Sonn for another black

Cricket

AFPI/AP, undated

South African cricket board president Percy Sonn said Thursday he wants to raise the quota of black and coloured players in the national team from one to two.

Sonn said Wednesday he intervened to force selectors to include coloured player Justin Ontong in their team for the third Sydney Test against Australia.

"I did intervene on a matter of policy and that right is invested in me as president," Sonn told reporters here.

In the wake of that decision, which is said to have divided the South African team, Sonn went further and said it was time to increase the quota of coloured players.

In an interview on Australian Broadcasting Corporation radio at the Sydney Cricket Ground Thursday, Sonn was asked if it was time to raise the quota from one to two.

"Yes, oh yes, you are so right," he replied.

South African cricket has a quota for one coloured player, which is met by Cape coloured opener Herschelle Gibbs.

There are quotas in place in South African domestic cricket, with each first-class team having to pick three black or coloured players.

Next season South African first-class teams will be compelled to pick four as the country's cricket board redresses the imbalance caused by the former apartheid system.

There have previously been attempts to bolster the quota for the national team in the past but they were met by resistance from former captain Hansie Cronje.

Sonn also said that South Africa was prepared to forgive the disgraced Cronje and allow him to play

a role in the republic's cricket.

Cronje is serving a life ban imposed 17 months ago by the UCB and endorsed by the game's governing body, the International Cricket Council.

"Who are you to damn people forever?" said Sonn, who once said Cronje was not fit to play beach cricket.

"Our board is not good in terms of determining what rehabilitation is



PERCY SONN

sufficient. Hansie deserves to enjoy all the freedom of South African society. He is a child of the UCB.

"We will look at it but I am sure there is a place for Hansie in South African cricket and South African society in general. He is showing signs of remorse by doing some good work for an underprivileged sporting club."

An appeal by Cronje to overturn the ban was rejected by a South African court last year.

Ontong is not in the South African team under a quota system but he was propelled to Test level on the back of a policy which states coloured and black players should, where possible, be given opportunities to play for their country.

Sonn argued Ontong was originally selected in the tour squad as cover for the lower order batting spots and when No.6 became

vacant with the axing of Lance Klusener, it was only right Ontong be given the opportunity.

The national selectors originally submitted a team which included Jacques Rudolph and there was the likelihood that the batting order would have been shuffled to play Rudolph at No.3 and move Boeta Dippenaar to No.6.

Sonn argued that "shuffling" could be perceived as discriminatory to Ontong.

"Shuffling to me amounts to exclusion of a person of colour who has the right to be given the opportunity," he said.

"Jacques Rudolph came over to shadow the first three -- he's a top order batsman, as is Boeta Dippenaar. Ontong was brought to shadow positions six and lower.

"If you try to shuffle number three into number sixes you are doing something that is exclusionary to people who are brought into to shadow other positions."

Asked if he had taken into account Ontong's poor form in his only tour match -- when he made a pair of ducks against New South Wales, Sonn said: "That was raised with me but I didn't regard that as cogent enough for me not to take action.

He said he spoke to South African captain Shaun Pollock about the matter, adding that the skipper didn't initially understand the policy.

Sonn said it was his organisation's responsibility to ensure "the national cricket team is more like South African society, rather than white."

"South African cricket is not isolated from South African society and life," he said.

"South African society has been a broken society and we need to make a contribution towards a better society."

Percy kicks up a row

Cricket

REUTERS, Durban

United Cricket Board (UCB) of South Africa president Percy Sonn's decision to drop a white player in favour of a black young prospect has dominated front and editorial pages in the nation's newspapers.

Sonn vetoed the inclusion of Jacques Rudolph in the South African team selected to play Australia in the third Test in Sydney, and insisted that Justin Ontong be picked instead.

Sonn cited the South African constitution's emphasis on human rights and the UCB's commitment to providing opportunities to players from South Africa's black communities as reasons for his decision. The team was amended accordingly.

"Cricket war at fever pitch," was the lead headline on the Pretoria News' front page. "We can forget winning next year's cricket World Cup -- on South African soil -- if the UCB continues interfering in the game as it has this week," its report began.

Durban daily the Mercury also carried a front-page report, and a comment piece on its editorial page by the Independent Group's tour correspondent, Patrick Compton.

The piece was headlined "It's not easy to win both ways," and began with, "The brutal truth about the Justin Ontong selection controversy is that the goals of transformation and the goals of maintaining a winning national cricket team are not always compatible.

"There is little doubt that part of the reason for South Africa's poor showing in Australia is that the players feel that they are being mishandled, misunderstood and under appreciated by South Africa's

politically-minded administrators... "When you leave on a tour to Australia, there is only room for one thought: victory. And that means the merit principle must overrule every other consideration.



JUSTIN ONTONG

"There have been public noises from the UCB that winning against the world champions is important, but there are others who say this is a smokescreen. That the team has been given the strong impression that, ultimately, transformation is more important than winning."

Independent Group papers also published a story in which sports minister Ngconde Balfour's spokesman, Graham Abrahams, was quoted as saying, "It was any other player but a black player, would we have had this media frenzy?"

Former Test batsman Graeme Pollock, a national selector and South Africa's official "cricketer of the century", also took issue with Sonn's decision.

"I think Justin has good cricketing ability and that he has a future, but that doesn't mean that picking him for the Test team right now is the correct decision," Pollock

was quoted as saying in the Independent Group papers.

"I don't believe we always think carefully enough about the player himself. How does Justin feel about playing when he knows many of his friends think he's just playing for political reasons?"

Former Test off-spinner Pat Symcox was also critical of Sonn's actions.

"We can't have our cake and eat it," the Independent Group quoted Symcox as saying. "We have to decide whether we want to be in line with the UCB's goals of being the best team in the world, winning World Cups, and pleasing spectators, supporters, sponsors and all the role-players.

"On the other hand we are trying to appease political aspirations, which is not very fair on the players." A front page report in the Cape Times included a quote from former left arm spinner Omar Henry: "I'm not sure of the exact facts coming out of Australia.

"But I am very disappointed in the people in this country who are meant to be taking cricket forward -- it has taken a presidential veto to give Justin his chance."

South Africa have lost the first two Tests on the Australian tour and the home side are in a very strong position in the final Test, having made 554 in their first innings.

Australia assertive

FROM PAGE 13 he was bowled by McGrath for three.

But the wicket of Kallis was the prized one. Gallantly run out for 99 going for a deserved century in the second innings of the last Melbourne Test, South Africa's best-performed batsman was deceived by a MacGill legbreak and feathered a catch to Adam Gilchrist for four.

Gibbs was back in the pavilion 20 minutes later when he went to drive MacGill only to get an outside edge to Mark Waugh at slip for 32.

His wicket left the South Africans floundering at 77 for four, but McKenzie and Ontong saw out the remaining 37 tense minutes to stumps.

South Africa's major task to save the Test is to negotiate the follow-on target of 354, but at stumps Thursday that looked a forlorn hope.

Earlier, Martyn backed up his unbeaten 124 in the first Adelaide Test to help Australia splurge on another 246 runs to their overnight 308 for five.

The stylish West Australian right-hander was out just before tea in a memorable innings.

"It was frustrating the way they were bowling, so I was just trying to put it back on them and change the field and I was just looking for a boundary shot, without too much danger, and it worked pretty well," said Martyn of his reverse sweeps to the on-side.

SCOREBOARD Scoreboard at stumps on the second day of the third and final Test between Australia and South Africa at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Thursday.

AUSTRALIA: First innings

Atapattu dropped Kandy Test from today

REUTERS, Kandy

Sri Lanka, 1-0 up in their three-Test series against Zimbabwe, have dropped vice-captain and opening batsman Marvan Atapattu for the second Test starting at the Asgiriya International Stadium on Friday.

Atapattu, who made only 25 in Sri Lanka's first innings of 586 for six declared in the Colombo series opener, is a veteran of 52 Test matches but was replaced by Chamara Silva in a 14-man squad named on Thursday.

Silva, 22, is a right-hand middle-order batsman who hit a match-winning 127 off 118 balls for a Sri Lankan Board XI against Zimbabwe in a three-day tour game last month.

TEAMS

SRI LANKA (from): Sanath Jayasuriya (captain), Russel Arnold, Kumar Sangakkara, Mahela Jayawardene, Hashan Tillakaratne, Chamara Silva, Tilan Samaraweera, Chaminda Vaas, Nuwan Zoysa, Muttiah Muralitharan, Prabath Nissanka, Buddhika Fernando, Upul Chandana, Niroshan Bandara.

ZIMBABWE (from): Hamilton Masakadza, Trevor Gripper, Stuart Carlisle, Grant Flower, Andy Flower, Gavin Rennie, Craig Wishart, Heath Streak, Travis Friend, Henry Olonga, Douglas Marillier, Gary Brent, Dion Ebrahim, Tatendra Taibu.

A negative

FROM PAGE 13 cricket at home for the next ninth months since there is little possibility of New Zealand coming in April-May to make up for their postponed tour of last year," he said Thursday in Karachi.

Sultan meets

FROM PAGE 13 the ousted executive committee on Thursday in an effort to solve the matter amicably.

However, it was not clear how the talks between Sultan and the former body went.

In another development, Sri Lanka has stepped in to host the SAFF Championship if Bangladesh loses the right to stage the sevenation on January 26.

The Lankans will not be coming to Dhaka unless the AFC-BFF wrangle is settled.

Even going

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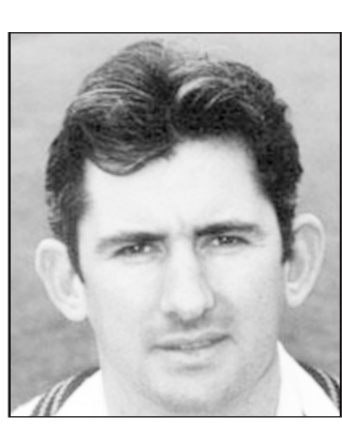
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Andys back for England

Cricket

AFP, London

The England selectors showed faith with the India tourists Thursday in making just two changes for the squad to tour New Zealand in a three-Test series starting next month.



ANDREW CADDICK

The only heads to roll from India were Gloucestershire off-spinner Martyn Ball and Somerset seamer Richard Johnson, neither of whom played a full match during the tour.

They were dropped to make way for the return of Andrew Caddick and Andrew Flintoff for the seamer-friendly pitches expected in New Zealand.

New Zealand-born Caddick is the only newcomer to the team who

lost 1-0 to India last month. He withdrew from the tour because of security fears.

Flintoff was not in the original squad for the India tour but was drafted in as cover because of doubts over the fitness of Craig White.

It means the selectors have given their full backing to the inexperienced squad that travelled the



ANDREW FLINTOFF

sub-continent before Christmas and leaves no place for Glamorgan off-spinner Robert Croft, who withdrew from the India tour because of fears about security.

Instead, the selectors have kept faith with Richard Dawson who made a promising debut in India.

"In picking this squad, we were keen to retain the nucleus of the team which exceeded many people's expectations in India before

Christmas," explained David Graveney, England's chairman of selectors.

"Andrew Flintoff made a significant impact with the ball on the sub-continent and he thoroughly deserves to retain his place in the squad and Andrew Caddick is a high-class bowler of proven pedigree at Test level and we are delighted to have him back."

Caddick will strengthen England's seam resources and supplement the encouraging performances of Flintoff and Matthew Hoggard with the new ball in India while James Ormond, Surrey's new recruit from Leicestershire, retains his place.

White will complete the seamer's line-up, but has been ruled out of the one-day series in India starting on January 19 because he is due to undergo keyhole surgery on his left knee.

He will be out of action for three to four weeks, but is expected to be fit for the New Zealand leg of this winter's tour and England will not be calling up a replacement.

SQUAD Nasser Hussain (captain), Marcus Trescothick, Michael Vaughan, Mark Butcher, Graham Thorpe, Mark Ramprakash, Usman Afzaal, Craig White, Andrew Flintoff, Warren Hegg, James Foster, Ashley Giles, Richard Dawson, James Ormond, Andrew Caddick, Matthew Hoggard.

Martyn thanks the tail

Cricket

REUTERS, Sydney

Damien Martyn paid tribute to the batting skills of Australia's frontline bowlers after they helped him complete a century against South Africa on the second day of the third Test on Thursday.

Martyn steered Australia to a daunting total of 554 with a magnificent 117 after featuring in a series of handy partnerships with the likes of Brett Lee, Shane Warne and Stuart MacGill, better known for their exploits with the ball rather than the bat.

"It's great for me to get a hundred here, I haven't got one in Sydney before, but I didn't do it by myself," Martyn said.

"It was important for the team that guys like Shane Warne and Brett Lee got some runs so we could get some partnerships going.

"Our goal is to get partnerships right down. These blokes work hard on their batting and that's why we can turn our 300s and 350s into

500s." With the prospect of a 3-0 series defeat looming large, South Africa's misery was compounded when fast



DAMIEN MARTYN

bowler Glenn McGrath and leg-spinner MacGill captured two wickets each in the final session to leave the visitors teetering at 93 for four at stumps, still 262 from avoiding the follow-on.

"We've done the first part now we've got to try and bowl them out

twice," said Martyn, whose century was his fourth at Test level.

"The last hour was a good session for us, to get four wickets was a bonus. We're in a good situation, they've got to chase 550 so we can attack for as long as we like."

Despite the seemingly one-sided nature of the series, Martyn said the South Africans had proven themselves as difficult opponents and had never thrown in the towel at any stage.

"They've been trying hard, they've put in the whole game," he said.

"Last night was good for them when they got those late wickets but we batted well today. If they got a few early wickets it might have been a bit different.

"They're tired after fielding for 10 hours but I don't think they're beaten or their heads are down.

"They've had a long time in the field, though, and now they've got to come out and bat pretty well and we've got two great spinners who are turning the ball a long way."

Australia chickenpox-ed

Tennis

AFP, Perth

Australia's world No 1 Lleyton Hewitt has been forced out of the Hopman Cup tennis tournament after catching chickenpox, competition director Paul McNamee said Thursday.

"He will be forced to withdraw from the Hopman Cup, but there is no reason to believe he will not take part in the Australian Open starting January 14," McNamee said.

Confirmation that Hewitt, 20, who was partnering 20-year-old 47th-ranked Alicia Molik, had the illness came only hours after initial tests gave him the all-clear.

Hewitt, who rocketed to the top spot in November when he won the Tennis Masters' Cup in Sydney, is the top seed for the Open in

Melbourne.

Hewitt helped Australia to a thrilling 2-1 win over Argentina on Wednesday despite having a fever, but had to go straight to a clinic afterwards for tests. Overnight he broke out in spots, his manager John McCurdy said.

Australia was Thursday forced to withdraw from the million dollar (500,000) Hopman Cup allowing Spain's Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario and Tommy Robredo to automatically qualify for Saturday's final.

McNamee said Hewitt's condition had been confirmed by Dr Peter Steele, the tournament doctor, after initial tests had proved negative.

"The second tests, which were specific tests, were requested by Perth infectious diseases specialist Dr Miles Beaman, and show conclusively that he does have the disease," he said.

"He has now been put on medi-

cation which blocks the symptoms and aids recovery time.

"This will minimise the effects. Lleyton is in good spirits.

"We are hoping he will be able to resume training in three to five days.

"Lleyton has still very much got his eye on the Australian Open -- something he wants to win, so that's what he is thinking. I see no reason why he should not be fit for the Open.

"Doctors are very confident that because of the way he feels, the way the symptoms are and the medication he is taking, there is no reason he won't be firing after several days.

"He will just accept it and get ready for the Open. It won't be perfect, but when Pete Sampras won Wimbledon last year, he was injured for the whole tournament and could not practice."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes clues like '38 Star of 41-Across', '56 Guys', '19 November', etc.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with clues for 8-24. Includes clues like 'FP B S R R P ' N M W W J N O U T H O Q', 'M T I I A W N F W I I O N Z O W Z C', etc.