

Nasser on rebels' side

AFP, London

England captain Nasser Hussain backed India star batsman Sachin Tendulkar and skipper Sourav Ganguly here Wednesday after the pair were axed from their country's squad for next month's International Cricket Council (ICC) Champions Trophy in Sri Lanka. Madras-born Hussain will lead England against India in the third Test here at Headingley from Thursday and while he will be doing all he can to put his side 2-0 up in the four-match series that has not stopped him supporting his opponents.

"We are showing solidarity with some very fine cricketers around the world who are having problems at the moment," Hussain said.

"It is very easy just to think of yourself and say 'I am all right, Jack' and just sign your contracts."

"If there are fellow cricketers out there struggling with signing contracts - especially pretty good players - we must not just think of ourselves at the present but of other people and of England cricketers of the future."

"We are the shop floor of international cricket, and those rights must be looked after at all times," Hussain added.

But Hussain insisted the row was not a major problem for his side, as England had "no superstars".

He added that his team's preparations for the Test had not been affected by the dispute. 5

Hopes for hockey

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When asked why the NSC did not send any rejoinder to all the national dailies who have published on Thursday that it had finalised a 74-member Bangladesh contingent without hockey, Rahman said: "If you say that it was a final decision I would not mind. But again, you can always reconsider something."

"We will have another discussion on Saturday evening during the meeting and if everybody agrees, we might make a change to our Wednesday's decision."

When asked why they are sending teams like athletics, boxing, wrestling, weightlifting and swimming where Bangladesh neither have any credibility nor any stake, Rahman said that these were the traditional sports that needed patronisation.

Rahman also said that he came to know that three athletes have good chances in the Games despite four leading athletes defected to England from the Commonwealth Games in Manchester last month. "That's why I wanted to give them a chance."

If hockey gets green signal, members of Bangladesh contingent would come to ninety, if not hundred.

Robin India

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notbudge." Dalmiya, besides rejecting any mediation by Shastris, said he believed the players were not entirely clear on their stand.

The probabilities, according to PTI:

Robin Singh, Sadagoppan Ramesh, Gautam Gambhir, Gagan Khoda, Daniel Manohar, Connor Williams, Hemang Badani, Rohan Gavaskar, Jacob Martin, Hrishikesh Kanitkar, Reetinder Sodhi, Jai Prakash Yadav, Vijay Bharadwaj, Rakesh Patel, Sarandeep Singh, Murali Karthik, Ramesh Powar, Sairaj Bahutule, Javagal Srinath, Venkatesh Prasad, Irfan Pathan, L Balaji, Debashish Mohanty, Deep Dasgupta, MSK Prasad.

Lankans prove stronger



AFP, Tangiers

Sri Lanka defeated South Africa by 27 runs in the Morocco Cup final here on Wednesday but paid a heavy price when captain Sanath Jayasuriya was injured. Jayasuriya, whose run-a-ball 71 earned him the man-of-the-match and enabled Sri Lanka to post 235-7 in the morning session, dislocated his right shoulder early in South Africa's reply, which ended at 208 all out.

Sri Lanka, however, bravely regrouped after the loss of their in-form captain, who was later named man-of-the-series for scoring 300 runs from five innings and claiming four wickets.

They reduced South Africa to 91-6 by the 26th over, slicing through the top order with wickets at regular intervals.

Boeta Dippenaar and Mark Boucher raised visions of a miraculous South African win by smashing 101 off 112 balls for the seventh wicket.

Dippenaar hit 53 before he was out caught in the deep off Pulasthi Gunaratne with 44 still needed off 34 balls.

Boucher cracked 70 from 65 balls but failed to secure victory when he was last out, caught behind off Gunaratne in the 49th over.

Gunaratne was well-supported by Chaminda Vaas and Muttiah Muralitharan, all three bowlers claiming two wickets each.

Sri Lanka, who lost both the Test and one-day series on the England tour earlier in the summer, were rewarded for their efforts with the champions' purse of 120,000 dollars.

Shaun Pollock's South Africa received 80,000 dollars, while

Pakistan who were ousted at the league stage, took home 50,000 dollars.

The Sri Lankans looked set for a massive first innings score when they rode on Jayasuriya's blitz to reach 167-2 in the 33rd over.

But a middle-order collapse, mainly through reckless strokeplay, saw five wickets tumble for 42 runs and allow South Africa to come back in the game.

Allan Donald, Lance Klusener and Nicky Boje finished with two wickets each as Sri Lanka managed only 43 runs in the last 10 overs.

But even the modest target of 4.7 runs an over proved beyond South Africa's reach after Jayasuriya's diving catch off Gibbs at mid-off.

Klusener, a surprise opener after Pollock said on Tuesday he would bat lower in the order, hammered 13 off 11 balls before missing the line of a slow full toss from Dilhara Fernando to be declared leg-before.

Graeme Smith played on to Vaas, before acting captain Marvan Atapattu caught Jacques Kallis and ran out Jonty Rhodes with a direct throw to make it 81-5.

Earlier, Sri Lanka began on a sound note as Jayasuriya and Atapattu belted 78 for the first wicket by the 15th over.

The pair were severe on tall seamer Roger Telemachus, who conceded 36 runs in his first four overs as Sri Lanka raced to 48-0 after just eight overs.

But the remaining batsman threw away their wickets with reckless shots, before Vaas and Muralitharan added a valuable 26 runs for the unbroken eighth wicket to boost the total.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard of the Morocco Cup one-day final between South Africa and Sri Lanka on Wednesday:

SRI LANKA: 235 for seven in 50 overs (Jayasuriya 71, Sangakkara 40, De Silva 33)

SOUTH AFRICA

Gibbs c Jayasuriya b Vaas 6

Klusener lbw b Fernando 13

Smith b Vaas 15

Kallis c Atapattu b Chandana 24

Dippenaar c Jayawadena b Gunaratne 53

Rhodes run out 6

Boje b Muralitharan 3

Boucher c Sangakkara b Gunaratne 70

Pollock run out 3

Telemachus b Muralitharan 0

Donald not out 0

Extras: (b-1, lb-7, nb-1, w-6) 15

Total: (All out in 48.3 overs) 208

Fall of wickets: 1-7, 2-24, 3-52, 4-71, 5-81, 6-91, 7-192, 8-199, 9-208

Bowler: O M R W

Vaas 10 0 33 2

Gunaratne 9.3 1 38 2

Fernando 7 0 38 1

Chandana 9 0 43 1

Muralitharan 10 0 35 2

De Silva 2 0 10 0

Arnold 1 0 3 0

Result: Sri Lanka won by 27 runs

Man-of-the-match: Sanath Jayasuriya

Man-of-the-series: Sanath Jayasuriya

Umpires: Daryl Harper (Aus) and Simon Taufel (Aus)

Third umpire: Srinivas Venkataraghvan (Ind)

Match referee: Gundappa Viswanath (Ind)

ICC remains rigid



REUTERS, Bombay

The International Cricket Council will retain its "ambush marketing" provisions for ICC events for next month's Champions Trophy despite a looming boycott threat by leading players, a senior official said on Wednesday.

ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed said the controversial contract drawn up for its events would also remain in place for next year's World Cup in South Africa.

"Any player who signs for the Champions' Trophy is bound to play... under those terms," Speed told reporters in Bombay during his trip to India on commercial ICC business.

Top cricketers from many countries led by India have refused to sign the ICC contract barring them from endorsing products of rival companies 30 days either side of a tournament, to protect official sponsors.

Speed said despite opposition by the players, the ICC would not allow any company to cash in on its events secured by other sponsors paying huge sums of money.

"For each event there is a separate agreement. (But) they are substantially the same," he said, adding: "At this stage that (ambush marketing) clause will be included in the World Cup terms."

Speed said although the ICC could carry out a future review of its contract, there were unlikely to be major alterations.

"There may be some minor changes. As we go through each event we will learn from the experience of running that event. We'll have feedback from players."

"But it'll substantially be the same because, having entered into the agreement for \$550 million (until 2007), having guaranteed the sponsors they will have exclusive rights, there is not much room to move."

The Indian board has said it would send an under-strength

squad to Sri Lanka if its top players did not sign up, although national boards are obliged to field their best sides in ICC tournaments.

Speed said: "BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) has said it will not name players who don't agree to sign the contract. If that happens, it becomes a matter for the ICC executive committee."

Dravid, Bangar

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over, Virender Sehwag drove loosely at a Hoggard outswinger and Flintoff, at second slip, took a sharp catch going to his left to leave India 15 for one.

Sehwag, who scored a century at Trent Bridge, had managed just seven this time around having faced 23 balls.

England lead the four match series 1-0 and India must win here to keep alive hopes of winning their first Test campaign outside the sub-continent in 16 years.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea on the first day of the third Test between England and India at Headingley on Thursday:

INDIA: First innings

Bangar not out 51

Sehwag c Flintoff b Hoggard 8

Dravid not out 51

Extras: (b-8, lb-3, nb-11) 22

Total: (For 1wkt in 59 overs) 132

Fall of wickets: 1-15

To bat: S. Tendulkar, S. Ganguly, V. Laxman, A. Agarkar, P. Patel, A. Kumble, Harbhajan Singh, Zaheer Khan

Bowler O M R W

Hoggard 16 6 33 1

Caddick 16 4 38 0

Tudor 14 8 17 0

Flintoff 8 1 25 0

Giles 5 1 8 0

ENGLAND: Michael Vaughan, Robert Key, Mark Butcher, Nasser Hussain (capt), John Crawley, Alec Stewart (wkt), Andrew Flintoff, Alex Tudor, Ashley Giles, Andrew Caddick, Matthew Hoggard

Toss: India

Umpires: Asoka de Silva (Sri), David Orchard (Rsa)

Third umpire: Peter Willey (Eng)

Match referee: Clive Lloyd (WIs)

Australians

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world's best players are able to participate in the Champions Trophy." May said in the ACB statement.

Australia's captain one-day captain Ricky Ponting said the promise that the ICC will consult with players over future sponsorship deals was the key to the compromise.

"The players have worked as best they could within the guidelines and the Australian Cricket Board are going to use their best endeavours to help the players out," Ponting told reporters in Brisbane.

"The players were very disappointed that they weren't consulted at what was in the contracts because they were the ones that were going to be left in the lurch."

"(The ICC) realise now that they've probably done the wrong thing and got themselves into a bit of a muddle and that was the thing we were most disappointed about," he said.

Sutherland said negotiations with players would continue.

"Where there is such a conflict, we need to work through that with the player and their sponsor to see what we can come up with to ensure that they're not disadvantaged," he said.

Thorpe has a week's time

REUTERS, Leeds

England absentee Graham Thorpe was given a week's deadline on Wednesday to decide whether to put his name forward to play in the Ashes series.

Skipper Nasser Hussain told a news conference at Headingley on the eve of the third test against India: "It will be up to Graham in the next week to get a phone call in to the England selectors to tell us that he's available."

The 33-year-old left-hander, regarded as the side's leading batsman, has taken a break from cricket after the collapse of his marriage.

His mind clearly elsewhere, he withdrew from the England team after the first test against India to negotiate custody of his children and has since opted not to play for his county side Surrey until the end of the English season.

That has led to speculation that he will not have played enough cricket to warrant inclusion in the Ashes party.

Hussain said that even if Thorpe made himself available he could not be guaranteed a place for the trip to Australia at the end of the year.

"Australia will view it as a weaker England side with Graham Thorpe not there -- he is one of our best players -- but we can't keep having the Graham Thorpe issue cropping up," Hussain added. "It will be a very difficult decision."

England's selectors are already discussing a possible Ashes squad. The announcement of the final list of names is likely to be delayed until after the fourth and final test against India at The Oval early next month.

Personal pressures and a back injury have blighted Thorpe's England recent career. But he continues to score around 45 an innings, a world-class performance and the best in the side.

He scored what was then the second-fastest double century in test history five months ago in New Zealand and scored a century against Sri Lanka at the start of the English summer.

Procter match ref for Kenya tri-series

AFP, Karachi

The International Cricket Council (ICC) Thursday appointed former South African all-rounder Mike Procter as match referee to oversee the upcoming tri-series in Kenya.

Pakistan, world champions Australia and Kenya will take part in the series to be held August 29-September 7.

It was scheduled for Pakistan but was shifted to a neutral venue after the Australian Cricket Board said it wouldn't tour Pakistan citing security concerns.

The series was plunged into further trouble when New Zealand declined to take part in the event, forcing Pakistan to include minnows Kenya.

All three teams will play on a double league basis with the top two teams contesting the final.

South African Rudi Koertzen and Zimbabwean Russel Tiffin will stand as the ICC neutral umpires while Pakistan's Aleem Dar, Nadeem Ghouri and Asad Rauf will act as home umpires.

SCHEDULE

Aug 29: Pakistan Vs Kenya

Aug 30: Pakistan Vs Australia

Sept 1: Pakistan Vs Kenya

Sept 2: Australia Vs Kenya

Sept 4: Pakistan Vs Australia

Sept 5: Australia Vs Kenya

Sept 7: Final

Siraj juvenile

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nament.

TEAMS

Ka Group Madarbari Muktakantha, Pahartali Ekadash, Sandhan Sporting Club, Halishar Ekadash, Monir Chairman Smriti Sangsad.

Kha Group Eden Star Club, Kalapote Kirra Sangstha, Amra Tarun, Betari Goli Ekadash, Principal/Abul Kashen Sangsad.

Ga Group Blue Star Club, Nobjagaran, Jomnapara Ekadash, Nobotaranga and Satabdhi Ghoshis.

Gha Group Hathazari Khelwar Samity, Rasad, Agrabad Pioneers, Ghosaidangha Young Boys Club and Ullash Sporting Club.

Equip 'em first

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Why didn't the BOA take the trouble to provide the other shooters with proper guns before they flew to Manchester? Perhaps this can explain why Sabrina and Fauzia failed to impress?

In reality then Asif's gold came about more as a result of luck having smiled on him.

It is hard to believe that a country can afford to pay eight hundred crore taka for a frigate, but cannot find funds to help their shooters.

With the Asian Games approaching isn't time that the government does everything possible not only for shooting, but also in other events so that our beloved flag is saved from being humiliated?

Otherwise, in the future Bangladesh may not find its name on the medals table of the next SAF Games -- **Moin ul Alam, 30 Minto Road, Dhaka**

US Open Tough draw for Lleyton



AFP, New York

Top seed Lleyton Hewitt of Australia will open his US Open defence against France's Nicolas Pietrangeli next week -- with big-serving Briton Greg Rusedski likely waiting for him in the second round according to the draw made here Wednesday.

Rusedski showed strong form in Indianapolis a week ago, where he beat Hewitt en route to the title.

The Australian world No. 1 hasn't won a tournament since his triumph at Wimbledon and will be eager to claim another crown in the final Grand Slam tournament of the season.

Should Hewitt make it to the third round, he could face American James Blake, who was eliminated by Hewitt last year in a bitter five-setter that was tainted by a charge of racism from the American, which caused a firestorm in the New York press.

American Andre Agassi, the sixth seed and a two-time champion, opens his campaign against compatriot Robby Ginepri, with a possible quarter-final re-match with Switzerland's Roger Federer, the man he beat to win his fifth title at Key Biscayne earlier this year.

Agassi could face Hewitt in the

semi-finals.

Pete Sampras, runner-up to Hewitt last year and seeded 17th, is in the other half of the draw and couldn't set up a 33rd career confrontation with Agassi before the final.

The former world No. 1 and 13-time Grand Slam champion is still seeking to recover the form that saw

third-seeded German Tommy Haas in the fourth round and a quarter-final against perhaps Andy Roddick or Briton Tim Henman.

Russia's Marat Safin, the 2001 champion and second seed also faces a difficult draw, meeting German Nicholas Kiefer before possible meetings with Brazilian Gustavo Kuerten.

Spain's eighth seed Albert Costa, king of Roland Garros, opens against Sweden's Magnus Norman.

On the women's side, the big guns appear to have it easy in the early going, with the Williams sister, top seeded Serena and No. 2 Venus, again in with a chance to make the final a family affair.

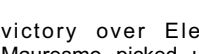
Serena Williams, seeking to add the title to her French Open and Wimbledon crowns, faces wildcard Corina Morariu, who just last month returned to the circuit after battling leukemia.

Elder sister Venus opens her defence of the title against a qualifier, as does third-seeded American Jennifer Capriati.

California's Lindsay Davenport, the fourth seed in search of her first Grand Slam title this season, faces Denmark's Eva Dyrberg in the first round while Switzerland's Martina Hingis, who missed Roland Garros and Wimbledon, opens against American Marissa Irvin.

His further path to the final -- which he has reached the past two years -- is not free of serious obstacles, including a possible clash with

Hingis stops Stevenson



AP, New Haven

Martina Hingis outlasted hard-hitting Alexandra Stevenson 7-5, 6-4 Wednesday to advance to the quarterfinals of the Pilot Pen.

The fifth-seeded Hingis, playing in her second tournament since ankle surgery in May, will face unseeded Anastasia Myskina in the quarterfinals. Myskina advanced over fourth-seeded Justine Henin.

Amelie Mauresmo, the sixth-seeded player, also advanced to the quarterfinals with a 6-4, 4-6, 7-6 victory over Elena Bovina. Mauresmo picked up her eighth singles title last week with win over Jennifer Capriati in Montreal.

Martina Sucha, a lucky loser, was rescheduled in her place. But Sucha wasn't as lucky against Schnyder, who beat her 2-6, 6-3, 6-3 in the late match. Schnyder will play Daniela Hantuchova in Thursday's quarterfinal. Hantuchova advanced with a 4-6, 6-4, 6-1 win over Iva Majoli.

Hingis also made it to the quarterfinals in Montreal. The former No. 1 player said she's gaining confidence with each match.

"I feel more comfortable out there now," Hingis said. "I'm not

afraid. I know what I can play. Right now, I'll just take any match, any challenge. I probably didn't play my best, but I won."

The taller, stronger Stevenson backed Hingis off the net for much of the match with 100-mph-plus serves and powerful ground strokes. Stevenson had seven aces to just one for Hingis.

But Hingis waited out Stevenson, pouncing on the few off-speed returns and scoring with well-placed drops and passing shots. Hingis converted five of six break points.

"When I needed to step it up I was able to do so," Hing