

Latif returning

REUTERS, Harare

Rashid Latif was en route for Pakistan on Monday after being forced out of the Zimbabwe tour with an injury to neck vertebrae that could threaten his career.

The Pakistan wicketkeeper, a veteran of 34 tests, withdrew shortly before the start of play in the first test on Saturday. Kamran Akmal, 20, who was selected for the tour to gain experience, made his debut in Latif's place.

Pakistan manager Brigadier KM Nasir told Reuters on Monday Latif would consult doctors in Johannesburg before returning home.

"We thought it would make sense for him to see a physiotherapist and a neurosurgeon in Johannesburg, because he had to fly there anyway on his way back to Pakistan," Nasir said. "He will see our doctors once he gets there."

Nasir said the injury, to Rashid Latif's first two vertebrae, affected him most when he was crouching while keeping wicket to spin bowlers.

"It can be classified as a career-threatening injury, that's why we've sent him home," Nasir said. "We are doing our utmost to ensure that he is fit for the World Cup next year."

Nasir said Pakistan would persevere with Kamran Akmal for the rest of their southern African tour, which also includes another test and five one-day internationals against Zimbabwe and two tests and five one-dayers against South Africa.

"He is a very agile wicketkeeper, and a very spirited young player," Nasir said.

Inzamam eyes

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His runs helped Pakistan set Zimbabwe an unlikely victory target of 430 and the home side were 19 for one in their second innings when bad light ended play 13 overs early.

Inzamam bludgeoned 48 of his first 50 runs in boundaries, a glut of runs he blamed on the lacklustre Zimbabwean attack.

"I got lots of loose balls to hit, that's why I didn't need to run much," Inzamam said. "But I'm ready to run if I need to."

He paid tribute to opener Taufeeq Umar, with whom he shared 180 runs for the third wicket and who scored a more sedate 111 off 229 balls with 13 fours.

"He played better than me, because he is a genuine opener and he had to bat through more difficult periods than me," Inzamam said.

Procter's

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the field.

West Indian paceman Vasbert Drakes and substitute Ryan Hinds were hit with bottles thrown by a section of the crowd at the 18,000-capacity Madhavrao Scindia stadium.

"The West Indies did not want to take the field after one of their players was hit and I agreed with them completely," said Procter.

"The West Indies and India captain Saurav Ganguly wanted the stadium to be cleared, but I realised there was not enough time to do that."

"I didn't want to penalise one team for what happened on the field. India made a fantastic start. They deserved to win. They were ahead (on run-rate)."

Procter conceded that crowd control had been a problem in the ongoing seven-match series.

"There's a difference between security and safety of the players," he said.

"Security has been tight at the hotel and outside the ground, but crowd control has been a problem."

The first two one-dayers at Jamshepur and Nagpur were also marred by disturbance from the stands.

Cricket is their light

AFP, New Delhi

They may have never seen a cricket match but are the most avid followers of the game; they may not be able to sight a ball but are raring to perform on the cricket field.

The band of 17 Indian players gearing up for the second World Cup Cricket for the Blind, to be held in the southern Indian city of Madras next month, hope to bring light to their dark worlds by winning the tournament.

"We want to win the World Cup for our country though we can't say for sure how much progress we've made since last time," said captain Ramkaran Sharma, who hails from New Delhi.

For Sharma, like the rest of the team, cricket is nothing less than a godsend.

"Cricket has given us something to look forward to in life. The kind of enthusiasm that the team has is unimaginable," said Sharma, who also played in the first World Cup in New Delhi four years ago.

Blind cricket players use a plastic ball packed with small metallic beans, which helps players track the movement of the ball.

The bowler sends down deliveries underarm and the batsman takes a swipe, most often what would be a sweep shot in regular cricket. The rest of the match goes on more or less like the regular game.

George Abraham, Chairman of the Association for Cricket for the Blind in India (ACBI), swears each match is keenly contested.

"You have to see one to believe it," he said.

Cricketers are classified into fully blind (B1), partially-blind (B2) and partially-sighted (B3) categories. Each team needs to have a minimum of four B1 category players, a maximum of three B2 and four B3 players.

"The rules have evolved over the years, but India has been instrumental in bringing various countries together," Abraham said. "We hope more and more countries will participate in future World Cups."

Defending champions South Africa, last edition's runners-up Pakistan, Australia, England, Sri Lanka and India are the six teams participating in the World Cup from December 3 to 14.

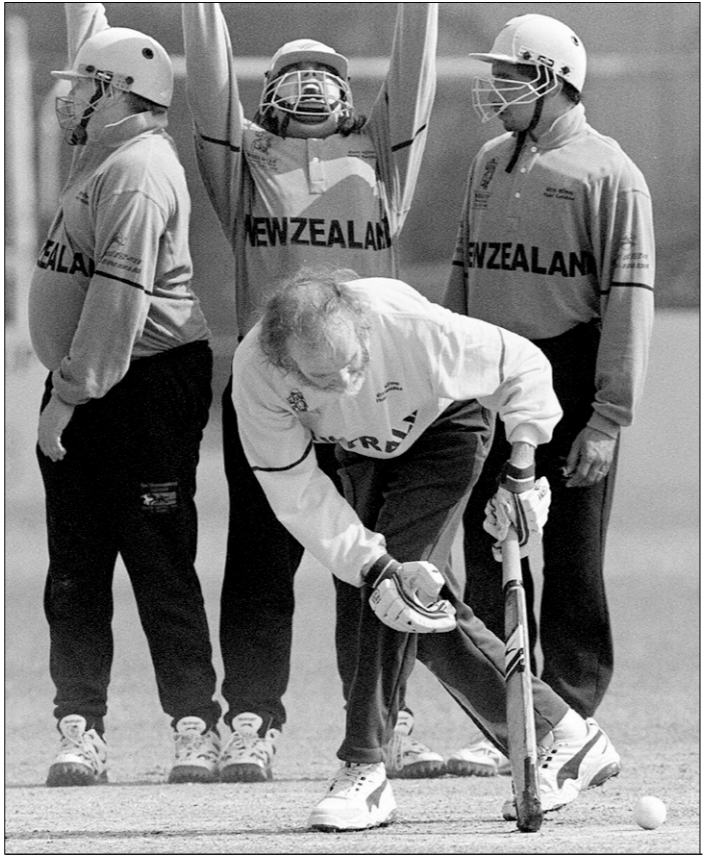
"New Zealand were allotted the tournament but India had to bail them out after they expressed inability to hold the event," Abraham said. "We've got support from all around, including famous cricketers and sponsors."

Former West Indian Test opener Gordon Greenidge was one of those moved by cricket for the blind and made it a point to attend a function organised by the ACBI to announce the Indian team for the World Cup.

"This is a noble cause and the sad thing about such a competition is that there can be only one winning team."

Abraham said the effort of holding a national championship since 1990 and having a domestic system in place in India was instrumental in popularising the game among those with an impaired vision.

"We owe a lot to people like former Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) President



A file photo shows totally blind New Zealand cricketers appealing for an lbw decision against an Australian batsman, who is also totally blind, during the first-ever cricket World Cup for the visually-impaired in New Delhi in November 1998.

"I'm happy to see that this form of cricket is going from strength to strength. I wish the upcoming event more success than the previous one," Greenidge said.

"But I feel cricket for the blind is a rather crude way to put it. It should be called cricket for the vision impaired."

Madhavrao Scindia, who helped give an impetus to the game not only in India but internationally," said Abraham.

Scindia, a leader of India's Congress party, died in an air crash last year.

"This World Cup will be held in his memory," said Abraham.

Talks only not enough

Cricket

AFP, Brisbane

The English cricket team choked on their emotions and consuming desire to win the first Ashes Test, an Australian sports psychologist said on Tuesday.

Phil Jauncey, who assisted the Australian cricketers, said emotions hindered England's performance on the way to their 384-run defeat at the Gabba last weekend.

"You could see that because of their feelings they were making choices they couldn't execute and they were poor choices," Jauncey said.

Jauncey said perhaps England players focused more on winning rather than the step-by-step process which would get them there.

"That's the problem that the English seemed to have is they

seemed to stop doing the little things."

He said the tourists quickly lost any advantage they may have enjoyed from using younger players with no scars from previous Ashes thrashings when Australia crunched them in Brisbane.

The English, who do not have a tour psychologist, indicated it was possible they would recruit one for the rest of the Australian tour, before the second Test in Adelaide on November 21.

But calling in a sports psychologist simply to pump up their deflated spirits would achieve nothing, Jauncey said.

He said some sports psychologists tried to motivate players to feel good before they hit the field.

"One of the things I teach players is it doesn't matter how you feel or think as long as you control your actions," he said.

England needed someone to help work through the problems,

teaching players to control only what they could - their actions, Jauncey said.

"If you look at the Australians, when the second day wasn't quite as good, they said what are we going to do to make it right, control their actions, and get going," Jauncey said.

"If the sports psychologist is going to help (England) say 'all right let's look at what's going to work for you and what doesn't work for you' then I think that would be really useful for them."

"If the sports psychologist says let's try to get you to feel really good, things will go wrong."

Jauncey worked closely with Australian cricket coach John Buchanan when he coached the Queensland Sheffield Shield cricket team and is the mental skills coach for Australian Football League champion team Brisbane Lions.

Fired-up Silverwood

Cricket

AFP, Hobart

Replacement England fast bowler Chris Silverwood has vowed to hit back at the all-conquering Australian

cricket team by fighting 'fire with fire.'

Silverwood might have been jettaged after flying in from England after being called up to replace injured the Simon Jones, but he promised all the non-sense aggression of a Yorkshire pace bowler.

Indeed the 27-year-old has spent

nearly as much time in the air as on the ground after getting home from the Hong Kong Sixes only four days before his call-up.

He was an hour late when he caught up with his teammates, who themselves spent half a day travelling from Brisbane to arrive in Hobart, where they'll meet Australia

Rookie takes Anil's place

AFP, Rajkot

Untested right-arm seamer Lakshmiipathy Balaji was on Tuesday called up by India for the next two one-day internationals against the West Indies.

Balaji and left-arm spinner Murali Kartik will replace Ajit Garkar and Anil Kumble for the matches to be played in Ahmedabad on Friday and Baroda on November 18, cricket board secretary Karunakaran Nair said.

Balaji forced his way in after a string of good performances for Tamil Nadu in domestic cricket.

SQUAD

Saurav Ganguly (captain), Virender Sehwag, Venkatesai Laxman, Rahul Dravid, Yuvraj Singh, Mohammad Kaif, Harbhajan Singh, Sanjay Bangar, Murali Kartik, Javagal Srinath, Lakshmiipathy Balaji, Dinesh Mongia, Jaiprakash Yadav, Ashish Nehra and Parthiv Patel.

Shoaib-Saqlain

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Saqlain and was caught behind for 69 having faced 113 balls.

Saqlain struck again in the next over when Guy Whittall edged a high bouncing delivery to Younis Khan at slip to be dismissed for two.

Andy Flower and Tatenda Taibu bolstered Zimbabwe with a brisk sixth-wicket stand of 53 before Taibu was trapped lbw by fast bowler Waqar Younis for 28 three overs after tea.

Umpire Srinivas Venkataraghavan's decision seemed harsh as the ball appeared to be missing leg stump.

That proved Zimbabwe's last meaningful stand, and the match was all over bar the shouting when Flower skied a short ball from Shoaib, with the bowler taking the catch.

Shoaib took his fourth wicket of the innings when he clean bowled Henry Olonga to end the match.

SCOREBOARD

Final scorecard on the fourth day of the first cricket Test between Pakistan and Zimbabwe at Harare Sports Club on Tuesday:

PAKISTAN: First innings 285 (T Umar 75, Y Youhana 63; A Blygnaut 5-79)

ZIMBABWE: First innings 225 (T Taibu 51 not out, A Blygnaut 50; M Sami 4-53)

PAKISTAN: Second innings 369 (Inzamamul Haq 112, T Umar 111; H Olonga 5-93)

ZIMBABWE: Second innings (overnight 19-1)

Ebrahim b Akhtar 69
Masakadza c Elahi b Akhtar 0
Campbell c Akhtal b Sami 30
G Flower c Akhtal b Saqlain 69
A Flower c and b Akhtar 67
Whittall c Younis b Saqlain 2
Taibu lbw b Younis 28
Blygnaut c Younis b Saqlain 12
Mahwera lbw b Waqar 3
Price not out 5
Olonga b Akhtar 5
Extras: (lb-8, lb-6, nb-5, w-1) 20
Total: (All out in 81.3 overs) 310
Fall of wickets: 1-9, 2-51, 3-162, 4-201, 5-203, 6-256, 7-280, 8-291, 9-301

Bowler O M R W
Waqar 16 1 73 2
Akhtar 18.3 4 75 4
Sami 15 3 50 1
Saqlain 31 5 98 3
Umar 1 1 0 0

Result: Pakistan won by 119 runs.
Man-of-the-match: Taufeeq Umar.

Umpires: D Orchard and S Venkataraghavan.

Lara clean

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officially closed and that the allegations made against him were unfounded."

The WICB has also submitted its report to the International Cricket Council.

In the course of the probe, commissioned in April last year, Motley conducted personal interviews with several people including Lara and visited the ICC's Anti-Corruption Unit for discussions with its head Paul Condon and his staff.

India debatable

Bowler O M R W
Srinath 9 0 46 1
Nehra 10 0 75 4
Agarkar 6 0 63 0
Yadav 2 0 14 0
Ganguly 7 0 30 1
Harbhajan 10 0 59 2
Sehwag 6 0 29 0

INDIA
Ganguly c C'paul b Drakes 72
Sehwag not out 114
Laxman not out 0
Extras: (lb-6, w-4, nb-4) 14
Total: (For 1 wkt in 27.1 overs) 200
Fall of wicket: 1-196

Bowler O M R W
Dillon 6 0 40 0
Drakes 6 0 36 1
Cuffy 6 0 41 0
Gayle 1 0 18 0
N'mootoo 5 0 43 0
Samuels 3.1 1 16 0

Result: India were awarded the match as per Duckworth-Lewis system for curtailed matches after crowd trouble forced play to be abandoned.

Man-of-the-match: Virender Sehwag.
Next match: Day-night game at Ahmedabad on Friday

Serena silenced

Tennis

AFP, Los Angeles

Kim Clijsters of Belgium did what few could in 2002, defeating world No. 1 Serena Williams 7-5, 6-3 here Monday to capture the prestigious WTA Tour Championships.

Clijsters, seeded fifth in the elite season finale which is open to the top 16 players in the world, posted her first career victory in over Williams, whose eight titles in 2002

career. She lost just 14 games and didn't drop a set en route to the 765,000-dollar winner's prize.

If someone had told her she would beat Williams in straight sets in the final, Clijsters said, "I wouldn't have believed him."

"I just tried to run as many balls back as I could, and she made some easy mistakes."

Clijsters earned the lone break of the second set in emphatic style, breaking Williams to love. She saved a break point in the next game, and clinched the match on

"When I was a break down, whenever I lost my service game, I said, just try to win the first point," Clijsters said. "I was so focused on the game, I didn't know if I was up or down."

Williams appeared poised to force the tiebreaker in the 12th game, leading 40-0 before Clijsters battled back. She gave Clijsters a set point with a double fault and saved it with a service winner before two errors cost her the game and set.

"I didn't think I was going to lose tonight," Williams said. "But I did kind of feel my time winding down, in my legs and my arm and my back ... Right now I feel like I'm 98 years old. Everything is broke. I'm ready to go home."

As the match wore on, Clijsters said, she noticed that Williams "wasn't moving as well as she normally does."

But Williams, who played just 13 tournaments this season and took October off, acknowledged that there were others among the elite field here who perhaps had more cause to plead fatigue.

"I don't want to take any credit away from Kim," she said. "She earned the win. She played pretty good throughout the whole tournament. I don't think she lost a set."

Clijsters also became the fourth player to beat both Serena and Venus Williams in the same tournament, and the first since Martina Hingis at the 2001 Australian Open. Arantxa Sanchez Vicario did it at Sydney in 1998, and Steffi Graf did it in Sydney in 1999.

This week, Clijsters advanced to the final when Venus Williams, the world No. 2 and second seed, retired with a strained lower leg while trailing 5-0 in the first set.

Williams, who had been seeking to become the first player since Graf in 1995-96 to defend the Championships title, pocketed 382,000 dollars. Had the 21-year-old won, she would have become the first woman player to surpass 4 million dollars in earnings in one year.

"I wish I could have done a little better in this tournament, but hey, I think I had a decent year," she said. "I won three Slams. I guess that's all right."



Belgian Kim Clijsters kisses the winner's trophy after beating American Serena Williams in the final of the WTA Championship on November 11.

included the French Open, Wimbledon and the US Open.

Williams suffered just her fifth defeat of the season and saw an 18-match winning streak snapped. As in her previous two matches here, she was hurt by her unforced errors -- 44 throughout the 1hr 25min match.

Clijsters, 19, captured her fourth title of the year and ninth of her

her first match point.

The first set was a back-and-forth affair that featured seven service breaks. Williams broke in the seventh game to lead 4-3 and held in the next game to lead 5-3. But serving for the set at 5-4, Williams was broken -- falling behind 0-40 and saving three break points before finally surrendering her serve for 5-5.

Moya exacts revenge

Tennis

AFP, Shanghai

Spaniard Carlos Moya rode his heavy forehand to an upset straight sets win over weary Russian third seed Marat Safin in the opening match of the season-ending Masters Cup here on Tuesday.

Moya, seeded five, gained revenge for a loss to Safin in the semifinals of the Masters event in Paris earlier this month, securing a 6-4, 7-5 win at Shanghai's New International Expo Centre.

Moya's topspin forehand was the difference between the players, and he used it to run his opponent around the court in a high quality match played on a slow indoor hardcourt surface.

Moya, a former world number one and French Open champion, cracked an off-forehand winner off a Safin second serve to break and go up 3-2 in the first set, setting the tone for the rest of the match.

In contrast, Safin made a rash of errors off his forehand, his acknowledged weaker wing, and was left to rue being able to convert just two of five break points.

"I had so many opportunities in the first set and so many opportuni-

ties in the second set," Safin said in a post-match press conference.

"I just couldn't make them and that's why I didn't deserve to win."

Safin said fatigue after playing 21 tournaments this year was another factor in the loss.

"For me, it's a very long season," Safin lamented. "I'm getting tired and I have no time for vacation."

Moya came into the match with a 1-2 career record against Safin and the big Russian was the favourite after winning in Paris.

And Safin looked to be in good form early, hitting five aces in his first two service games,

But Moya patiently waited for

Safin's game to cool down and then gained control of the match with cleverly crafted points from the baseline.

Moya acknowledged being able to blunt Safin's serve was a key to his victory.

"I was able to return his serve very well and I was able to put on a lot of pressure and I think that was the difference," Moya said.

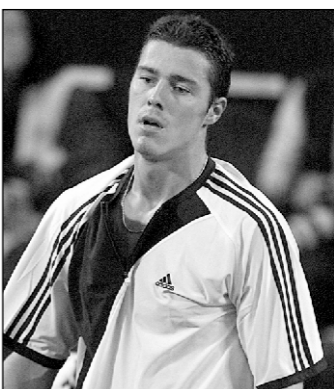
Moya and Safin opened the Masters Cup tournament, with world number one Lleyton Hewitt due to play Spaniard Albert Costa later Tuesday.

The four players are in the Red Group of the round robin tournament, with Andre Agassi, Juan Carlos Ferrero, Roger Federer and Jiri Novak in the Gold Group.

Ferrero and Federer were due to play the third and final match of the first day late Tuesday evening.

The top seven players in the Champions Race automatically qualified for the elite, season-ending event. Costa, who is 11th in the race, scored a berth by winning the French Open.

A player can win 1.52 million dollars if he goes through the Masters Cup undefeated.



MARAT SAFIN

Ardent Andre

Tennis

AFP, Shanghai

Andre Agassi may be a father and giving away five years to his nearest rival at this week's season-ending Masters Cup in Shanghai, but the American veteran is as motivated and enthusiastic as ever.

"This is exciting," the famously shaven-headed 32-year-old declared to reporters here on the eve of the tournament, where he will be vying to become the world's oldest player to finish the year ranked number one in the world.

Agassi has come through a gruelling year of hard training to reach peak fitness after being forced to miss the Australian Open with a wrist injury in January.

But 10 months later, Agassi declared he was as strong and healthy as he could possibly be, and just as importantly, as in love with the game as at any time in his career.

"I am still enjoying it," the seven-time Grand Slam champion said. "I'm still frustrated by it, I'm still disappointed by it, I'm still excited by it, which is good. I think those things need to exist."

"Every time I play a great match on a tennis court in front of a lot of people and I am so thankful that I have worked so hard -- that's my motivation."

However Agassi conceded his

focus had drifted more towards his family after his wife, Steffi Graf, gave birth to their son, Jaden Gil, in October last year.

And with his great rival, Pete Sampras, giving signs he may be on the verge of retirement, Agassi said there have been some brief thoughts of giving the game away -- but they have been quickly dismissed.

"There's no question in my mind

don't think that I have done that fully yet."

Agassi's obstacle this week in his dream of finishing the year ranked number one is Australian Lleyton Hewitt, who last year became the world's youngest number one by winning the Masters Cup in Sydney.

Hewitt is just 21 years old, but in a contrasting press conference on Monday, the gritty baseliner marvelled at Agassi's longevity while giving no hint he wanted to emulate him.