

Wasim wants to be captain

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan cricket legend Wasim Akram will file an appeal against a ban on captaining his country after being implicated in match-fixing, relatives said Wednesday.

"Wasim has met several experts on law, and to my knowledge he has already filed an appeal against the recommendations of a judicial inquiry," Wasim's wife Huma told AFP.

Pakistan's first match-fixing inquiry, conducted by Lahore High Court Justice Malik Mohammad Qayyum in 1998 and 1999, banned Salim Malik and Ataur Rehman for life and fined six others including Wasim, who was fined 300,000 rupees (about 5,000 dollars).

The Qayyum Commission also censured Wasim and recommended he should not skipper his country again. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) implemented the recommendations in May 2000.

Pakistan media has been widely speculating that current captain Waqar Younis, although appointed captain until the World Cup in 2003, will make way for Wasim after the on-going series against South Africa.

Pakistan has a history of sacking captains and coaches midway through their tenures.

Sources close to Wasim said he would file an appeal in the Lahore High Court on December 22, explaining his reluctance to play Test matches in South Africa from December 26. He is currently playing one-day series in South Africa.

PCB spokesman Samiul Hasan confirmed Wasim conveyed his desire to file an appeal.

"Wasim, as an independent citizen, has his right to challenge, but the PCB is not providing him any legal or technical support," Hasan said.

He refused to comment on whether Wasim would be appointed captain if he wins the appeal.

"We will cross that bridge once it comes," he said.

Wasim led Pakistan to a runners-up finish in the last World Cup, held in England in 1999, but his three tenures were marred by match-fixing controversies.

The eighth World Cup is due to be held next February and March in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya.

Unfriendly Friend

AFP, Kwekwe

Zimbabwe opening bowler Travis Friend stole 91 runs to set Kenya a stiff target of 273 for four wickets in the second of three one-day internationals here on Wednesday.

Friend, who needed only 81 balls, hit two sixes and nine fours while figuring in a 146 runs partnership for the second wicket with his captain Alistair Campbell before being run out by substitute James Kamande.

His innings and the platform they built enabled Zimbabwe to score 273 in their 50 overs for the loss of just four wickets, the Zimbabwe middle order making good use of the final 10 overs after Campbell was caught on the boundary for 71, a patient knock that required 122 balls.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Zimbabwe innings against Kenya in the second of three one-day internationals at the Kwekwe Sports Club on Wednesday:

Table with columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Lists bowlers like Campbell, Vermeulen, Suji, Ondik, Odumbe, Angara, Kikolo and their statistics.

Extras: (lb-3, w-3, nb-3) 9. Total: (For 4 wks in 50 overs) 273.

Did not bat: D Mariller, T Taibu, B Murphy, H Olunga, D Honda.

Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-157, 3-195, 4-223.

Umpires: Alim Dar (Pak) and Mumtaz Ahmed Esat (Zim).

Nafis, Javed

FROM PAGE 13. BARISAL DIVISION: 196 all out in 57.5 overs and 59 for three in 26 overs.

DHAKA DIVISION: 324 for nine in 100 overs (Javed Omar 111, Halim Shah 98, Mazharul Haq 32, Anis 1-16, Debabrata Paul 1-44, Rajon 4-125, Touhid 2-44).

RAJSHAH DIVISION: 118 all out in 46.1 overs and 94 for one in 26 overs (Tanna 34, Parvez 34 not out; Mustadir Litu 1-13).

RAJSHAH DIVISION: 341 for eight in 100 overs (Rafiqul Islam 19, Jahurul Islam 78, Nuruzzaman 45, Anisur Rahman 54, Mushfiq 44, Hasanuzzaman 57 not out; Nayeem 2-99, Enamul 4-113, Parvez 2-32).

No plan of quitting

Cricket

REUTERS, Sydney

Nasser Hussain denied on Wednesday he planned to relinquish the England captaincy after next year's World Cup.

Hussain's side has endured a dismal Ashes tour since arriving in Australia eight weeks ago, losing the first three Tests by big margins and failing to win a match so far in 11 attempts.

"I've not made any decisions on my future. I haven't made any decisions at all," Hussain told a news conference in Sydney on Wednesday.

A story in British newspaper the Daily Mail on Wednesday reported that Hussain would step down as captain after the World Cup in March.

Hussain, 34, has led England to 14 wins, 12 draws and 14 losses in 40 Tests. He said England needed to look to the power of youth to find some positives from the Ashes tour.

"We just have to make sure that, character-wise, everyone who wants to go out there on Friday believes that they can beat Australia," the captain said.

"If there is a fresh young body that we feel can do that, we've got to give him that opportunity.

"It can't be any worse than it has gone in the last couple of months, so

let's give people opportunities."

The tourists suffered an embarrassing four-wicket loss to an invitational Australia Prime Minister's XI in Canberra on Tuesday.

England face world champions Australia in the opening match of the triangular limited overs series in Silverwood also ruled out of the tour.

England spokesman David Clarke said on Wednesday uncapped Lancashire pace man James Anderson, 20, had been called up from the England academy squad in Adelaide as cover for Caddick.

Off-spinner Jeremy Snape was ruled out for three weeks after breaking his thumb while batting in a one-day match against New South Wales in Sydney on December 6.

"Continuity is the key, especially in one-day cricket because everyone knows their position in the team and they know their roles," Hussain said.

"That's what we've got to get to, whether it be this World Cup or the World Cup after."

"Whether that means more contracted one-day players or just playing for England in one-day cricket, people have to play a lot of one-day internationals in their position -- batting, bowling and fielding -- and get used to it."

"That's what the South Africans have done and that's what the Australians have done, it's just the basics of one-day cricket."

"Our injury situation and our tinkering all the time will not help that."

Nasser spurs mates on

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Nasser Hussain on Wednesday called on his embattled England cricket team to take the fight to Australia in the opening triangular one-day cricket series match here on Friday.

England will go into the match on the back of three embarrassing warm-up defeats -- to New South Wales, Australia A and the Prime Minister's XI.

But Hussain has urged his inexperienced charges to "go in there with the freshness of youth".

"Take the battle, enjoy the battle. That's one disappointing thing about this tour so far. I'd like to get into a battle with this Australian side -- right there, 50th over, 10 to win..." Hussain said on Wednesday.

"We've got to make sure we get ourselves in that position by playing some positive, attacking, vibrant cricket. We have got to put ourselves in that position."

"These day-night games are special occasions and that's why I love the game. I want to see a battle and I want some of our boys to take

the battle to the Australians."

After 11 games without a win on a tour that has been ravaged by a succession of injury blows, Hussain was forced to deny suggestions he had decided to step down as captain after the World Cup.

The 34-year-old said he had not made any decision but insisted his pride and hunger to play for England remained, despite the troubled times.

He has been left frustrated by what would appear to be backward strides, particularly after England's impressive performances during the home series against India and Sri Lanka earlier this year.

England's plan for continuity has been shot to bits, and without a settled side, all good plans unravel.

"The one thing that makes any side successful is continuity. This Australian Test and one-day side revolves around 14 or 15 players," he said.

"Continuity is the key, especially in one-day cricket because everyone knows their position in the team and they know their roles."

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"That's what the South Africans have done and that's what the Australians have done, it's just the basics of one-day cricket."

"Our injury situation and our tinkering all the time will not help that."

"When you have your whole team decimated by injuries you have to start afresh, which is what we have done with this side."

"Let's start afresh, start anew. What are we going to lose? It can't be any worse than it has gone in the last couple of months, so let's give people opportunities."

And with the new influx comes fresh enthusiasm, evidenced by the performances of Ronnie Irani, James Kirtley and Gareth Batty.

"We've got to make sure, character-wise, that everyone who goes out there on Friday believes they can beat Australia."

"Come Friday, what's happened in the last three games will be an irrelevance."

"It was a disappointing tour in South Africa because we didn't do very well but we are confident we can do well here," the captain told reporters after his team arrived at Brisbane airport.

"This is very important for us because it's the last series we'll play before the World Cup (in South Africa in February) and it's going to be tough competition here."

Sri Lanka will play a warm-up match against Australia A in Brisbane on Saturday ahead of their first game of the series against England in Brisbane on December 17.

Australia will start the series with matches against England in Sydney on Friday and Melbourne on Sunday.

Spinner Muttiah Muralitharan, recovering from a hernia operation, is expected to miss the first half of the series from December 13-22. The series resumes on January 9 after the fourth and fifth Ashes Tests in Melbourne and Sydney.

Canada finalise World Cup side

INTERNET, Toronto

Underdogs Canada have become the first team to confirm their final 15 for next year's cricket World Cup in South Africa.

The team, captained by Joseph Harris, will leave for Namibia next month to complete their preparations prior to their opening group game against Bangladesh in Durban on February 11.

Canada qualified, together with Holland and Namibia, from the ICC Trophy competition in Toronto last year.

But they only did it by beating Scotland in a third place play-off, after failing to reach the final.

It will be Canada's first appearance in the World Cup since 1979, when they lost all three matches in England.

Their squad contains only five players with first-class experience, the best known of whom, spin bowling all-rounder John Davison, is currently playing for South Australia in the Pura Cup.

And there is confusion over who will be coaching the team during the World Cup.

Former West Indies Test batsman Gus Logie told the Trinidad Express newspaper that he had agreed to take the job, replacing Australian Jeff Thomas.

"It's a challenge like everything else. It's an opportunity for me as well to see how much input I can make into the development of Canada's cricket," he was quoted as saying.

But Harris said he was "shocked" by news of Thomas' departure.

"We've really jelled as a team and the coach has done a great job bringing us together," he said.

An official announcement from the Canadian Cricket Association is expected later this week.

SQUAD

Joseph Harris (captain), Ashish Bagai, Ian Billcliff, Desmond Chumeny, Austin Coddington, John Davison, Nicholas de Groot, Davis Joseph, Ishwar Maraj, Ashish Patel, Abdul Samad, Kevin Sandher, Fazil Samad, Barry Seebaran, Sanjayan Thuraisingam.

Sanath ready for tough tri-series

REUTERS, Brisbane

Sri Lanka captain Sanath Jayasuriya is expecting a tough battle in the triangular limited-overs series against Australia and England starting later this week.

Sri Lanka will use the tournament to regain form following their 4-1 series loss in South Africa, Jayasuriya said.

"It was a disappointing tour in South Africa because we didn't do very well but we are confident we can do well here," the captain told reporters after his team arrived at Brisbane airport.

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Saurav eyes history

Cricket

AFP, Wellington

Saurav Ganguly just has to look at his New Zealand counterpart Stephen Fleming to draw inspiration in a bid to become the most successful Indian captain in Test cricket.

Fleming has already added this feather to his cap, having led his team to a New Zealand record of 17 wins in 47 Tests since taking over the captaincy from Lee Germon in 1996-97.

Ganguly, 30, is just one Test win away from equalling Mohammad Azharuddin's Indian record of 14 victories. He has so far scored 4,071 runs in 65 Tests with nine centuries.

He is also looking forward to winning the two-Test series against New Zealand, for that will enable India to clinch the first Test series outside the sub-continent in 16 years.

"We want to win a Test series abroad," Ganguly said ahead of Thursday's opening Test against the hosts.

"This is my aim. If we win a series here, I'll equal or set the Indian record. Things are changing in recent years as we have won Tests in Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka and the West Indies. We now hope to win the series here."

Fleming, with 4,217 runs in 71 Tests with four hundreds, was in the same boat when he became captain aged 23. He needed nearly three seasons to lead his team to the first overseas Test series win, against England in 1999.

Ganguly is now in his third season without an away Test series victory, though he came close to achieving it in 30 matches as captain.

It is a tribute to Ganguly's leadership qualities that he has managed to make the country believe that he can fulfil a long-cherished dream.

Self-belief is what the current Indian and New Zealand teams owe to their captains, who donned the mantle in unexpected, but testing, conditions.

Both took time to gain complete control over things.

Fleming took over after Germon had been axed for the last Test against England at home in 1996-97, while Ganguly replaced Sachin Tendulkar who stepped down after a two-Test home series against South Africa in 2000.

Fleming was inexperienced, but turned out to be a fast learner as he kept improving with each match to eventually transform New Zealand into a confident and combative outfit.

Australian leg-spin wizard Shane Warne was not off the mark when he recently said Fleming was the best captain in the world.

New Zealand produced quite a

few stunning results under Fleming, beating England in 1999, winning the ICC Trophy the following year, drawing a tough three-Test series in Australia and winning 1-0 in the West Indies this year.

Ganguly also has succeeded in moulding his team into a fighting unit after steering it through the turbulent times of betting and match-fixing.

His greatest asset is backing his players to the hilt, as he has done with left-arm fast bowler Zaheer Khan, off-spinner Harbhajan Singh and young one-day specialists Yuvraj Singh and Mohammad Kaif.

All of them have now become integral parts of the squad.

Yet, the southpaws are different characters.

Ganguly likes a scrap. He does not mind letting his emotions run riot, much to the purists' annoyance.

Some of the former Indian cricketers found it hard to swallow when they watched Ganguly take off the shirt after his team successfully chased 325 against England in the NatWest Trophy final at Lord's this year.

Observers believe Fleming will not betray his emotions so easily, though he is as deeply involved in the game as the Indian. He is cool, calculated and always trying to think a step or two ahead of his counterpart.

Warne wary of wounded Eng

Cricket

REUTERS/AFP, Sydney

England's failure to record a single victory in 11 matches on their tour of Australia will count for little when the one-day series starts this week, Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne said on Wednesday.

Warne warned his Australian teammates to beware of wounded England ahead of Friday's opening one-day cricket international here.

The tourists remain winless so far on their Australian tour but the champion leg-spinner believes only a piece of individual brilliance could turn things around.

"Things aren't going as they

(England) would like them to but it's up to them to dig deep," Warne said at the Sydney Cricket Ground after training.

"These one-day practice matches, that's all they are. At the moment they're not playing as well as they would like, but beware the wounded."

"In a one-dayer anything can happen. That's the beauty of one-day games, someone produces an unbelievable batting display, a brilliant run out, a great catch and the whole game turns around. It just takes one bloke."

England have lost their three one-day practice matches leading into the opening match of the triangular series also involving Sri Lanka -- against New South Wales last

week, Australia A on Sunday and the Prime Minister's XI in Canberra on Tuesday.

The three countries will play five matches from December 13-22 before Melbourne and Sydney host the fourth and fifth Ashes Tests from December 26-30 and January 2-6 respectively.

The one-day series resumes on January 9 when Australia play Sri Lanka in Sydney. The best-of-three finals series is scheduled to start on January 23 in Sydney.

And England continue to be plagued by injuries, with a decision on the future of all-rounder Andy Flintoff to be made within the next day (Thursday).

Flintoff, one of England's bright hopes heading into the tour, has struggled after an operation for a double hernia and was again out-of-sorts in Canberra.

But for all of England's woes, Warne had words of encouragement for them on Wednesday.

"The one-dayers haven't even started yet -- that's what matters," Warne said.

"It doesn't matter what's happened previously. In one-day cricket... you just don't know what can happen. We have to be ready."

The Australian one-day team were intent on keeping England on their knees before the Test series resumes in Melbourne on Boxing Day.

"It's a matter of keeping them down," Warne said.

"There's still two very important Test matches to play in Melbourne and Sydney, so it's important to stay on top of England in the one-day series."

"For me I'm looking forward to getting on a spinning wicket (in Sydney)," Warne added.

However, Australia will give England a brief respite from one of their in-form pace bowlers in Friday match.

One of Glenn McGrath, Jason Gillespie, Andy Bichel or Brett Lee is likely to be rested for the match, allowing Tasmanian all-rounder Shane Watson another chance to impress ahead of next year's World Cup.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Chief of Army Staff and president of Kurmitola Golf Club Lt Gen Hasan Mashud Chowdhury (2nd from left) is seen with the participants of the Partex 18th Bangladesh Amateur Golf Championship during the inaugural ceremony at the Kurmitola Golf Club yesterday.

Old wine in a new

FROM PAGE 13

DSS: What do you think is your strength in bowling?

VD: It's difficult to say exactly. I like to think that I'm very competitive and having played at the highest level I know that the consistency in terms of bowling the ball in the right areas has to be spot-on. I try my best to bowl in the right channel.

DSS: How important is pace to you?

VD: You definitely got to have pace at this level if you want to rush the batsmen. It could be a part of your armoury but at the same time you need to have the skill to know where and how to put the ball to create pressure.

DSS: How serious are you about your batting? We know that you have four first class hundreds. Where did you bat for the teams you've played for?

VD: It varied. Sometimes they used me at the top in the one-dayers as a sort of pinch-hitter although I don't consider myself as one. But the majority of the times my employers took my batting for granted. But make no mistake I'm very serious about my batting.

DSS: You seem to be a very fiery person on the pitch. How are you off it?

VD: (Laughs) It's better to ask my teammates. I try to be helpful and sociable. I'm a very easygoing person.

DSS: Going by your performance on the unfriendly tracks of the sub-continent, you could be one of the stars on the fast, bouncy pitches of South Africa in the World Cup, more so because of your experience of playing in that country?

VD: I'm not in the World Cup squad yet. At the end of the day you put yourself in a situation where the selectors assess your performance and make a decision. Cricket is a funny game so you can't take anything for granted. That's why it's wiser to keep the feet firmly planted on the ground.

DSS: What is your opinion of the Bangladesh team?

VD: At times they really made life difficult for us. There are some real talents here. But look, you've only just started. I'd request you not to put pressure on the guys who are playing. You have to be patient. Success won't come overnight.

DSS: What are your immediate aspirations in terms of playing, as time is not on your side?

VD: I wouldn't say it like that. In fact, I see myself as a constant source of energy, still full of youth. I don't look at my age. To me the more important aspect is the ability to enjoy the game and if you can do that then you can carry on performing irrespective of your age.

DSS: Does it also mean that you're relishing the prospect of playing Test cricket?

VD: I see myself as a cricketer so I wouldn't like to be limited to the one-day variety only. Given the opportunity I would like to show that I can do the job in the longer-version too. (Laughingly) You could say I'm old wine in a new bottle.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a 'Solution time: 25 mins.' section at the bottom.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with a key: F G A Q S S R N P P U N P E D Z D P N D S S G E Q H N D K K R N R U R N U H Q N Z Z E N F Q Z R A N D A X R R X F S N Z Z K U R !

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THE MUSHROOM HAD NO IDEA WHY HE GOT NO DATES. AFTER ALL, HE WAS REALLY A FUNGI. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R equals T. The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.