

Experts back Murali

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

Sri Lankan spinner Muttiah Muralitharan should be allowed to bowl his controversial 'doosra' as he does not gain "unfair advantage" with his bowling action, experts have recommended in a report.

"It would be unrealistic to ban Murali's 'doosra' delivery without the benefit of proper research having been undertaken into normal spin bowlers," former Western Australian coach Daryl Foster said in the report, published by India's Hindu newspaper on Thursday.

Foster was part of a four-member team that tested Muralitharan's bowling action early this month after the Sri Lankan was reported for his 'doosra', a delivery which spins away from right-handers instead of coming into them.

The Sri Lankan off-spinner went to Australian for scientific tests after being reported by English match-referee Chris Broad in the third and final Test against Australia in Colombo last month.

Muralitharan, 32, is now just seven victims short of breaking retired West Indies paceman Courtney Walsh's world record of 519 Test wickets, a feat he is set to achieve in next month's two-Test series in Zimbabwe.

The tests were conducted at the Biomechanics Laboratory of the School of Human Movement and Exercise Science in Western Australia by a team comprising Professor Bruce Elliott, Jacques Alderson, Siobhan Reid and Foster.

"A straightening of 10 degrees when he (Murali) bowls his 'doosra' is not excessive and that should not therefore be deemed advantageous," Foster said in the report which is in two parts – Bowling and Remediation.

The experts said Muralitharan initially straightened his arm 14 degrees while bowling the 'doosra' during tests, which was nine degrees more than what is permissible for spinners under the International Cricket Council (ICC) guidelines.

The tolerance limits set by the ICC are five degrees for spinners, 7.5 for medium-pace bowlers and 10 for pacemen.

Muralitharan was tested again a week later after going through a remediation process, straightening his arm 10.2 degrees this time which was still five more than what is permitted.

The report recommended that Muralitharan's level of acceptability be set at the 10-degree mark because of the speed of his upper arm rotation as it is not believed to give the Sri Lankan an "unfair advantage over batsmen or other

bowlers".

"We contend that because the speed of his upper arm rotation is as fast, and in some cases quicker than fast bowlers, his level of acceptability for elbow extension should also be set at the 10-degree mark," it said.



MUTTIAH MURALITHARAN

"A case can certainly be made for some spin bowlers such as Muralitharan to have the same range of acceptability in elbow angle to that of fast bowlers.

"With no spin bowling data base to make a comparison, this would seem both a wise and prudent recommendation."

The ICC, however, has already said it will not relax its stipulated

tolerance levels.

The report also questioned the ICC's tolerance figures, querying why 10 degrees of extension was acceptable for pacemen and only five for a spinner whose arm speed was similar.

"Without knowing what the situation is with other spin bowlers, it would seem unrealistic to ban Murali's 'doosra' without the benefit of proper research having been undertaken into 'normal' spin bowlers.

"Other off-spin bowlers, in particular Harbhajan Singh (India), Saqlain Mushtaq and Shoaib Malik (both Pakistan), all bowl the 'doosra' delivery which suggests for comparison purposes their 'other one' should also be analysed," he said.

Foster was all praise for Muralitharan, saying the Sri Lankan knew his "body and technique" very well and was able to adjust to the technical changes easily.

"In conclusion, Murali, who has been tested more than any other bowler in the history of the game – 1995, 1999 and now – possesses different physical characteristics which make him a unique bowler."

Eng forced

FROM PAGE 13

The ICC accepts that a country can cancel a tour if directly ordered to do so by its government, but the British government, despite its concerns about Zimbabwe, has said it is leaving a final decision to the ECB.

Des Wilson, chairman of the ECB's Corporate Affairs and Marketing Advisory Committee, resigned on Tuesday over the Zimbabwe tour and the ICC's new penalties.

In his resignation letter Wilson accused the ICC of imposing "draconian and disproportionate" penalties on countries which refused to tour other nations for moral reasons.

He said the ECB should tour only under protest while seeking "to change the protocol so that no other country can be coerced in this way".

Also on Thursday, the Daily Telegraph said Australia had been the principal driving force in ensuring the sanctions became part of the ICC regulations.

PCB in for embarrassment

Cricket

PTI, Islamabad

Pakistan fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar Thursday claimed to have shown to an inquiry commission a "medically documented" rib injury that prevented him from bowling against India in the Rawalpindi Test recently, which may acutely embarrass Pakistan's cricket bosses who had suspected him of faking the injury.

The controversial speedster underwent scans at the Shaukat Khanum Memorial Hospital on Wednesday and reports indicated swelling in the rib.

"The scans have proved the truth that I did not feign injury during the match. I have swelling on the 11th rib," Shoaib was quoted as saying in Pakistani daily The Nation.

"I have always done justice to my job and given my 110 per cent. I had a fall during bowling in the first innings and I injured my hand as well as my back. I informed about my injury to the captain and the manager," he said.

The daily said the four-member

medical inquiry panel had detected the injury, and if it is officially confirmed, it could turn out to be a major embarrassment for top PCB officials including its chairman Shaharyar Khan.

The injury in Shoaib's rib was confirmed by sources close to the commission.

Asked about how he managed to bat on the fourth day of the Test if he was really injured, Shoaib said bowling requires a run-up from 40-yards and delivering the ball with certain force while batting involves less strain.

"During bowling the whole body has to be pushed very hard but the case of batting is different and before batting I had taken some pain killers," he said.

He also denied any differences with skipper Inzamamul Haq, who had questioned his sincerity, and said, "We play for our country not for personal gains."

All-rounder Abdul Razzak, who had also appeared before the medical commission on Wednesday, told reporters that he would not play in the English county season in view of the injury and take

a month's rest instead.

"I am feeling 70 per cent fit now although I have started light training. I will go all out for bowling practice from next week. I will not be traveling to play in the English county this year and will be staying with the team," he said adding that he had explained about his injury to the commission.

Meanwhile, Shoaib's former coach Sabih Azhar has given his charge the clean chit.

"I know him since he was a child and I can tell you that he will never feign an injury," said Azhar, who now coaches the Rawalpindi team.

"He has won us many matches from hopeless situations and I can tell you he is hard working and will never shy away from a challenge. Although I haven't met him for long, I am sure injury would have forced him out. Otherwise, it is hard to believe that he would do such a thing."

Shahriar turns up heat

FROM PAGE 13

four games Shahriar started cautiously but grew in confidence as the innings progressed. He shared a record opening stand of 152 runs with in-form Anisul Hakim before the latter departed for 49.

The stand surpassed the previous best of 143 between Golam Mabud and Rafiqul Islam of ARAF Apparels against Acme Laboratories.

Shahriar smashed seven boundaries to reach his 50 in 65 balls and completed the maiden CCL ton with nine fours and a couple of sixes. He celebrated his hundred with another six against off-spinner Nizamuddin but mistimed a fourth attempt in the next ball only to be caught at wide mid-off, leaving GrameenPhone five short of the target.

The Gazi Tank innings never flourished against the matured pace duo of Khaled Mahmud and his former national teammate Monjurul Islam, who shared five wickets between them.

Opener Shafiu Alam made 42 while Sumon Barua (39) and skipper Rashed Rana (43) steadied the Gazi Tank ship after they lost half the batting for 78 runs.

BIMAN V DEVSQUAD

Humayun Kabir starred in Biman's success for the second successive game when the unheralded all-rounder took his second four-wicket haul before giving the national airliners a fine start scoring 49 off 98 balls.

Kabir, who took 4-34 and scored 39 against GrameenPhone two days ago, repeated the same feat but this time it was against the youthful BCB Development team and in the tranquil settings of country's lone sports institute.

The left-arm spinner shared seven wickets with his captain Sanwar Hossain, who took three for 31, to restrict Development squad to 187 in 48.3 overs. Opener Ashraful Islam struck a fine 77 off 117 balls that included four boundaries and six and Kamrul Islam made 42 off 64 balls in a second-wicket stand of 92 runs.

But once Humayun removed dangerman Ashraful the youth surrendered meekly.

ISPAHANI V BADC

In another curtailed-over match, Ispahani survived a scare before scrapping home with an 11-run victory. Chasing Ispahani's 232 in a reduced 47-overs-a-side contest, BADC ran close to the target before finishing on 229-9.

Arif Ahmed top-scored with 45 and Sohail Hossain made 41 after Ispahani captain Minhazul Abedin

Moya falters

REUTERS, Barcelona

Defending champion Carlos Moya lost 6-4, 6-4 to Argentine Gaston Gaudio in the Barcelona Open third round on Thursday.

The Spanish number two seed struggled to find his rhythm after Gaudio consolidated an early break of serve to claim the first set.

Moya fought back from 3-1 down in the second set but was unable to peg back his 13th-seeded opponent.

Magura soccer

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Kushtia Daulatpur College won a tie-breaker while Meherpur Mujibnagar College got walk over in their respective matches in the final round of the inter-college football tournament at the Magura Stadium yesterday.

In the first match Daulatpur College Ekadosh beat Magura Nazir Ahmed Degree College 5-4 in a tie-breaker.

In the other match Mujibnagar College Ekadosh got a walk over as Bagerhat Dikraj College did not appear in the venue.

Mini-marathon

CU CORRESPONDENT

A mini-marathon titled 'Maltova recharge marathon' will be held in Chittagong tomorrow on the occasion of May Day.

The race will start from Prabartak intersection at 9:00 am and it will be ended at MA Aziz Stadium.

Around 250 school students and cricketers of different academy aged between 15-25 will take part in the race.

Participants can registrar their names till the race is started.

Rameez loses his father

CRICINFO, undated

Raja Saleem Akhtar, the father of Test cricketers Wasim and Rameez Raja, died of a heart attack in Lahore on April 22. He was 74.

A retired civil servant, Raja Saleem Akhtar played first-class cricket for Multan and Sargodha as a right-hand batsman and leg-spinner. He made his first-class debut for Multan against Bahawalpur in 1958-59, and later captained them.

Venus reaches qtrs

Tennis

AFP, Warsaw

Venus Williams reached the quarterfinals of the J and S Cup in Warsaw when she defeated Australian Open semifinalist Fabiola Zuluaga 4-6, 6-2, 6-0.

The second seeded American, who appears to have found her form again after struggling in the early stages of her comeback from a six-month injury break, made a hesitant start before dominating her frustrated opponent from Colombia.

Often unable to put her first serve into play, Williams was tested by an opponent who thrives on clay. Despite breaking to love to lead 2-0 with three returns and a crosscourt forehand winner, Williams double-faulted to allow Zuluaga to recover the break in the next game.

Battling to stay in contention against Zuluaga's strong forehand and greater consistency, Williams saved three break points at 2-2, but then lost her serve to love at 4-4 and failed to convert a break point as Zuluaga served out for the set.

But Williams swiftly turned the match around in the second set. Finding greater accuracy with her serve and rallying more aggressively, she dropped just one point in her first three service games and swiftly built a 5-1 lead.

Although she then lost her serve and had to break again to level the match, and then had to survive two break points as the deciding set got underway, Williams didn't look back after taking a 2-0 lead on her fourth

break point.

Top seed and defending champion Amelie Mauresmo will face Eleni Daniilidou of Greece in the second round on Thursday, after Daniilidou dismissed Argentine Gisela Dulko 6-2, 6-2 by winning the last four games of each set.

Italian sixth seed Silvia Farina-Elia beat Denisa Chladkova of the Czech Republic 6-4, 6-1, winning four straight games in the first set and conceding just four points in four games at one



VENUS WILLIAMS

stage of the second.

There were also first round wins for seventh seed Patty Schnyder, who beat Elena Tatarkova 6-3, 6-4, and Magdalena Maleeva, who beat Elena Likhovtseva 6-3, 6-1.

Francesca Schiavone, who was given the number nine seed when fifth

seed Paola Suarez withdrew, overwhelmed Tina Pismanik 6-3, 6-0, and Lenka Nemeckova won 6-3, 6-2 against Henrieta Nagyova.

In a second round match, eighth seed Anna Smashnova-Pistolesi beat Daniela Hantuchova 6-4, 7-5.

Schuettler on course

AFP, Berlin

Top seed Rainer Schuettler maintained his perfect record against fellow German Tommy Haas to advance to the Munich Open quarterfinals on Thursday.

Schuettler, runner-up at the Monte Carlo Masters on Sunday, won the second-round match 6-4, 2-6, 6-4, his fourth victory in as many matches between the pair.

Wild card Haas, who missed the whole of last season with a shoulder injury, upset American Andy Roddick in the Houston final this month.

Jiri Novak, seeded third in the claycourt tournament, earlier lost in straight sets to fellow Czech and occasional doubles partner Radek Stepanek.

The unseeded Stepanek won 6-3, 7-5 and will next meet Peruvian baseliner Luis Horna, who advanced to the last eight by knocking out seventh-seeded American Taylor Dent.

Horna was leading 6-4, 3-1 when Dent withdrew because of injury.

ICC wallops Wilson

Cricket

AFP, London

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has issued a stinging response to a senior English cricket official who accused the sport's governing body of malevolent behaviour aimed at forcing England to tour Zimbabwe later this year.

Des Wilson resigned from the England and Wales Cricket Board's management board earlier this week after it became clear that the ECB would have little option but to fulfill its commitment to touring Zimbabwe.

Wilson had written a paper in January arguing that England would be justified in pulling out of the tour on moral grounds, given the abuses of Robert Mugabe's regime in Zimbabwe.

But just as the ECB appeared to be moving towards such a decision,

the ICC raised the stakes by adopting new rules in March which mean England could face a one-year suspension from international cricket and a two-million-dollar fine if they decide not to tour.

ICC president Ehsan Mani said Wilson had made his position untenable by leaking the content of his discussion paper to the press in an attempt to bounce the ECB into a decision to pull out of the tour.

"Wilson's attempts to pressure people were naive and ill-considered. It should have come as no surprise to him that the net effect of his leaking was to damage the relations between the ECB and other Boards," Mani said.

Wilson had taken a sideswipe at the ICC in his resignation statement.

"The fact is the ECB has been placed in an intolerable position by the ICC's inflexible and, in my view, malevolent enforcement of its international tours programme with draconian and disproportionate

penalties that would devastate the English game, forcing the ECB itself into insolvency and bankrupting up to a third of the first-class counties," he said.

Mani hit back by describing Wilson as "ill-informed and out of touch."

"I find it surprising that Mr Wilson is so confident in his own abilities that he believes he has the right to become the self-appointed instant expert on complex issues relating to international cricket."

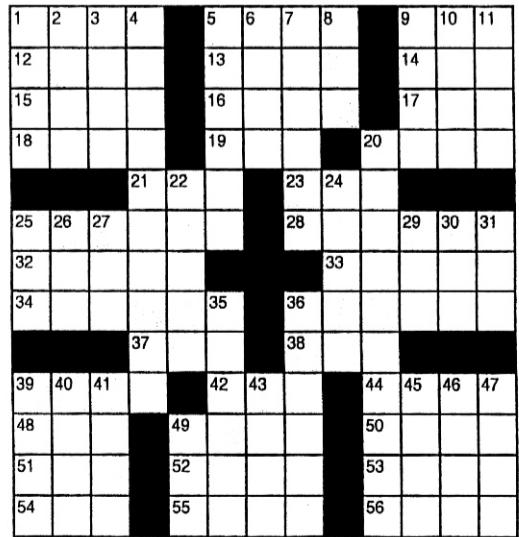
The ICC supremo added: "Despite Mr Wilsons ill-informed comments, the fact remains that all countries, including England, support the position that safety and security are the factors to be taken into account when assessing whether a tour is to proceed."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Resorts inter-national?
5 Gloomy
9 Remuneration
12 NYC-based sitcom
13 Writer Jaffe
14 — out a living
15 Bygone, to Burns
16 Cold War era letters
17 Predetermine
18 Merriment
19 Born
20 Squeal to the cops
21 Succumb to gravity
23 Parisian pal
25 Ailment
28 Wild and crazy
32 Water, for example
33 Prefix re the CNS
34 Tease
36 Played in the alley?

37 Law (Lat.)
38 Spoon-bender
Geller
42 Twitch
44 Information
48 Sapporo sash
49 Tilt to one side
50 Dash-board device
51 Rep.'s rival
52 — gin fizz
53 Therefore
54 Sight-seer?
55 "— It Roman-tic?"

DOWN
1 Grownup
Bambi
2 Fab Four name
3 Shaft (Abbr.)
4 One way to ride
5 Needing a bath
6 Stood
7 Pants
8 Scratch
9 Gilpin of "Frasier"
10 Related
11 Safe-cracker
12 Rattle-snake type
13 Simpson of fashion
14 Estate house
15 Work-week
16 component
17 name (Abbr.)
18 Pink-slip
19 Goller's concern
20 — 'de-sac
21 Exist
22 Space-craft
23 compartment
24 Praises highly
25 Pail
26 Style
27 Follow the rules
28 Rickey flavor
29 PC picture
30 Hibernia
31 Comical types
32 Pigeon-hole
33 CBS crime drama



CRYPTOQUIP

F C R K W P M K A X U L P Q
O B P N B P Y M T M A B N Z B R R U P
N R N X L P F C A X T W G M K A ,
M Y P C G M P Q " K R Q M Z P . "

Yesterday's Cryptiquip: SINCE I'M NOT MARRIED AT THIS TIME, I LIKE TO THINK I'M FOOTLOOSE AND FIANCE-FREE.
Today's Cryptiquip Clue: R equals O

The Cryptiquip 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.