

Dutch tourney kicks off with Indo-Pak tie

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan and India will open a one-day tri-series which will bring big-time cricket to the Netherlands on August 21, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced Wednesday.

World champions Australia will also play in the series.

"The final Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to be signed shortly and involved boards of Pakistan, India and Australia besides the involvement of the Netherlands board," PCB general manager cricket operations Zakir Khan told AFP.

The Netherlands' Amstelveen stadium hosted one match in the 1999 World Cup held in England.

Australia will take on India on August 23 and two days later square off with Pakistan. The final will be played on August 28.

Until March last year, Pakistan and India had played only one one-day match in three years. India broke the deadlock over political tension between the two countries by touring Pakistan earlier this year after a gap of 15 years.

The traditional rivals are also due to lock horns in the six-nation Asia Cup in Sri Lanka next month and will play before an already sell out crowd at Edgbaston, England when they meet in the 12-nation ICC (International Cricket Council) Champions Trophy on September 19 this year.

Pakistan is due to tour India to play three Tests and five one-day matches early next year.

BKSP becoming

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"The Kazakhstani youth (under-19) football team defeated our national youth team 3-0 but the same team went down 5-0 when they played the BKSP boys. Our Under-19 cricket team lost to New Zealand in the Youth World Cup. But our boys convincingly defeated the Kiwis a few days earlier. It proves that when the boys get out of here, they miss something."

"I think that at this stage, they miss the proper training and environment we provide here. We need to build up a player till 24 or 25 years of age because it needs at least 10-11 years to groom someone properly. But actually, most students leave us even before being 19. We have introduced degree courses to stop that but still, students with very educational background only stay back."

"If we could offer them honours or masters degrees, we could keep our students for the benefit of the whole country's sports. I know it's difficult but at least we can start with some easy subjects."

'Change rules ICC!'

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka Wednesday asked the International Cricket Council (ICC) to change laws in a bid to end controversy over the 'doosra' delivery of the world's highest Test wicket-taker Muttiah Muralitharan.

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) president Mohan de Silva said he had asked the ICC to increase the tolerance limit to possibly 15 degrees.

The tolerance limits set by the ICC are five degrees for spinners, 5 for medium-pacers and 10 for pacemen.

"We have written to the ICC today asking them to review the tolerance limits based on a scientific study of bowling action of all bowlers," de Silva told reporters.

"We are not sure there should be one limit for a pace bowler and another for a spinner. A pace bowler can deliver a slow bowl and a spinner can deliver a fast bowl."

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Japan crush India

AFP, Tokyo



Japan crushed India while South Korea and China both re-coded easy victories as Asian football's big guns all moved a step closer to the 2006 World Cup on Wednesday.

India, footballing novices who have never come close to qualifying for the World Cup, found a rampant Japan too hot to handle in Group 3 as they slumped to a 7-0 defeat at the Saitama Stadium.

South Korea, meanwhile, bidding for a sixth consecutive appearance in the World Cup finals, defeated Vietnam 2-0 while China trounced Malaysia 4-0.

Japan's victory saw the Asian champions maintain their 100 percent start to preliminary qualifying after earlier wins over Oman and Singapore, who play in Muscat and Al Ain respectively.

The result erased memories of South Korea's last outing against Vietnam eight months ago when they fell to a shock 1-0 defeat in an Asian Cup qualifier.

That upset set in motion a string of setbacks that included defeat to Oman and a draw to lowly Maldives in March that triggered the abrupt departure in April of coach Humberto Coelho of Portugal.

He has yet to be replaced but there was no danger of another below-par performance Wednesday as a strong South Korean side dominated the game throughout. South Korea lead the group with seven points from three matches.

Meanwhile, in a Group Five qualifier in Bangkok, North Korea trampled on Thailand's hopes with an emphatic 4-1 away win, featuring a brace of goals from Kim Yong-Su.

In a Group Eight encounter in Jakarta, Indonesia edged out Sri Lanka 1-0 thanks to a first-half strike by Elie Abey.

The scoreline might not have been as emphatic but South Korea

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De Silva said he had the backing of at least six other Test playing countries in seeking a change of the bowling rules. He, however, declined to name them, only saying that they were mainly "Asian".

He said Sri Lanka Cricket had assembled a team of lawyers to prepare a document for the ICC and the use of a large contingent of legal experts was to show the ICC "that we mean business".

De Silva said Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse dropped the idea of suing the ICC after being advised of the proper procedure to follow by the local governing body of the sport.

He said the premier's backing was crucial to defend Muralitharan, whose bowling action was proved to be beyond the limits imposed by the ICC.

Rajapakse had said that Muralitharan, the most successful bowler in Test history with 527 wickets, was a national asset and he

would do everything within his power and that of the government to defend the bowler.

Muralitharan, whose unorthodox action has seen him being labelled for 'throwing' in the past, came under fresh scrutiny because of the 'doosra'.

The bowler was told in April that if he persisted with it he could face a year-long ban.

Muralitharan was sent to Australia to work on his action after he was reported by English match-referee Chris Broad following the third and final Test against Australia at Colombo in March.

ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed had already said that a report forwarded to him by Sri Lanka Cricket but compiled by the University of Western Australia, meant Muralitharan's 'doosra' could no longer be tolerated.

The report showed an initial straightening of the arm by 14 degrees which after remedial work was reduced to 10 degrees, still five degrees more than the level of tolerance for spinners.

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