

Pathan waiting

FROM PAGE 13 "After a three months break we are together and all the cricketers are working and training really hard."

Asked how he coped up with the pressure in Pakistan last year when he emerged as the leading wicket-taker, Pathan said, "It was all God's grace."

"There was lot of pressure. I was new at that time having played only one series against Australia before that. But I handled the pressure well and by God's grace I performed well," he said.

On the secret of his success so far, Pathan said that he always tried to stay positive.

"I talk to myself before every match. I tell myself that I have to bowl well and take wickets. I think about all sorts of positive things that helps me," he said.

Aussies aim

FROM PAGE 13 dissent towards an umpire's decision - after a wide was called off one of his deliveries.

But in a brief statement, the ICC said a panel of match referee Chris Broad, standing umpires Steve Davis and Billy Bowden and third umpire Bob Parry had decided the charge should not be upheld.

Skipper Smith

FROM PAGE 13 Africa and England at St George's Park on Friday.

Table with 3 columns: Player, Runs, Wickets. Includes names like Trescott, Jones, Solanki, Strauss, Pietersen, Collingwood, Bell, Giles, Ali, Gough, Extras.

Table with 4 columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Includes names like Pollock, Ntini, Nel, Boje, Kallis, Kemp, Smith.

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Result: South Africa won by 3 wickets. Man-of-the-match: Graeme Smith. Fourth ODI: Feb 6, Cape Town.

Shoaib has to prove fitness

BBC/CRICINFO, undated

Express Pakistan bowler Shoaib Akhtar has been warned that he will not be picked for the forthcoming tour to India unless he is fully fit.

Shoaib was told to return home from the current trip to Australia after aggravating a hamstring problem.

But Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Shaharyar Khan also questioned his "attitude and conduct" on tour.

The pair met on Friday when the PCB described as a "hard talk" took place and Shoaib was given 48 hours to explain his behaviour in writing.

Newspapers in Australia claimed Shoaib was seen in bars and clubs during the recent Test series which the tourists lost 3-0.

But the 29-year-old subsequently claimed photos of him apparently taken at a party following the Sydney Test were fakes.

"This ugly campaign of fabricated pictures on the Internet rubs salt to my injury and I think it is character assassination," he said.

"I know I have to raise my fitness levels but I assure everyone that I never fall short in commitment. I played in Sydney half-fit because the team needed me."

He recently told Pakistan's News newspaper: "I would only ask the Board not to hold me solely responsible for the team's poor performances in Australia. Don't make me the scapegoat. Cricket is a team game and everyone is responsible for the failures."

Shoaib, dubbed the Rawalpindi Express, is the quickest bowler in international cricket, but has suffered a number of injury problems during his career.

The same report quoted Abbas Zaidi, the PCB's media director, as saying: "There is no such thing and they are all playing for the country, doing their job as one unit."

And when pressed further, Zaidi would only echo the statement made by Shaharyar saying that Shoaib would only be named in the squad if he was fully fit.

Since Shoaib's return, Pakistan stormed into the final of the VB Series with two splendid victories in Perth, and then splashed Australia hard in the first final. Naved, who carried on playing despite the death of his father back home, was singled out for special praise, with his attitude and dedication gaining many admirers.

Some claimed he had faked the problem, but reports showed he had a rib stress fracture.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's tumultuous cricketing year appeared set for another crisis with several leading players reportedly asking for Shoaib to be omitted from the squad to tour India.

The Nation reported that captain Inzamam-ul-Haq, vice-captain Yousuf Youhana, Abdul Razaq, Shahid Afridi, Younis Khan, Navedul Hasan and Salman Butt are among those supposed to have objected to Shoaib's continued presence in the line-up.

StanChart goes to Liakat

SPORTS REPORTER

Liakat Ali won the 10th Standard Chartered Golf Tournament at the picturesque Bhatiyari Golf and Country Club in Chittagong on Friday.

MH Murad finished runner-up. The tournament was participated by 106 Bangladeshi and expatriate golfers including four lady players.

Vice-president of the BGCC, Brigadier General Abu Belal Mohammad Shafiq Huq inaugurated the meet. General Officer Commanding of the 24th Infantry Division, Major General Iqbal Karim Bhuiyan attended the prize-giving ceremony as chief guest.

Osman Morad, CEO of Standard Chartered and a host of other senior bank officials were also present.

OTHER RESULTS Second runner-up: JK Kang Ladies' winner: Shereen Ispahani, Ladies' runner-up: Dr Caroline Bauer, Nearest to pin: GH Song, Longest Drive: Hole 9: GH Song, Nine Hole: Lt Col Md Rafiquzzaman, Best Back Nine: Amjadul Pervez Chowdhury, Best Front Nine: Lt Col Md Kamruzzaman, Senior winner: CH Moon and Senior runner-up: Shamsul Huda.

Former South Africa fast bowler Peter Heine has died in Johannesburg on Saturday aged 76.

Heine made his Test debut at Lord's in 1955, dismissing Tom Graveney, Peter May, Denis Compton, Ken Barrington and Godfrey Evans on his first day.

He finished with 58 wickets in 14 Tests and 277 first-class wickets at an average of 21.38 for Orange Free State, North-Eastern Transvaal, and Transvaal.

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I'll be back: Hayden

AFP, Melbourne

Dumped Australian opener Matthew Hayden said he had been treated harshly by selectors but vowed to bat his way back into the world champion one-day cricket team.

Speaking after he was left out of the side which beat Pakistan by 18 runs in the opening VB Series final, Hayden said he wanted to remain a part of the Australian team for upcoming tours of both New Zealand and England.

"Obviously when you love playing for Australia as much as I do, it's very disappointing to get dropped," Hayden said.

"I see this personally as a temporary thing. I will make sure that whatever it takes, I will fight my back in."

Australia will play three one-day internationals in England starting in July as the lead-up to the five-Test Ashes series.

But before then comes a series of five one-day clashes in New Zealand - starting on February 19 - leading into a three-Test series and

sarily permanent even though the 33-year-old is highly likely to be omitted for the rest of the best-of-three triangular series finals, including Sunday's potentially series-deciding match at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

Test colleagues also lent him their support on Saturday with leg-spinner Shane Warne, who has retired from international one-day cricket, declaring that Hayden still had much to offer.

"I don't think it's nice when anyone gets dropped who has been a pretty regular player for a few years now," said Warne.

"Knowing Matthew Hayden, I know he'll respond to that. Someone's going to pay. Whoever he starts playing soon, whether it's New Zealand in the Test series or the one-day series when he gets back, then some team is going to pay seriously. Beware of Matthew Hayden."

Hayden travelled to Sydney on Saturday with the 14-man Australian squad but selectors are expected to stick with Clarke as Adam Gilchrist's opening partner for Sunday's match, despite his nine-run effort on Friday.

Ban 'em: Beckenbauer

AFP, Berlin

Franz Beckenbauer, head of the 2006 World Cup organising committee, on Friday called that referees found guilty of match-fixing should be barred from the game for life.

The German soccer legend was speaking after the German Football Federation (DFB) confirmed that 25 people are accused of fixing matches in German league games including four referees.

A total of 14 players are also suspected of taking financial bonuses while two Croatian brothers from Berlin have already been arrested.

"Naturally, and in common with all football fans, I am shocked at these scandalous incidents," said Beckenbauer.

"Like most others I never believed it possible here. The whole sorry episode must be completely resolved by the judiciary and the DFB as swiftly as possible. I am confident the procedures now being followed will achieve this goal.

"I cannot and will not pre-empt the relevant authorities, but I am personally of the opinion that persons proved guilty of manipulating results should be subject to the maximum possible penalties.

"Referees proven to have deliberately made false decisions, thus defrauding the game of football and its fans, should never be licensed again. This is the only way to prevent further damage to German football both at home and abroad."

However the man nicknamed the "Kaiser", who won the World Cup as a player in 1974 and coach in 1990, is convinced the scandal will not tarnish the image of the host nation in the run-up to the 2006 World Cup.

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League to probe Cole approach

AFP, London

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"We are talking to both clubs to decide how to proceed," Premier League chairman Richard Scudamore told The Sun on Saturday.

Newspaper reports suggest that Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho and chief executive Peter Kenyon met the England full-back who is still under contract with the Gunners in a London hotel last week.

Chelsea have refused to deny the claims, while Arsenal say they want to sift through all the evidence before deciding whether to make a formal complaint.

Cole is in talks with Arsenal on a new contract.

The 24-year-old told the Gunners' official website: "I'm under contract here for another two years so I just want to get back to playing football and trying to win the league."

Chelsea have refused to discuss the controversy but Mourinho has made no secret of his admiration for the defender.

"I said that he was a good player. If I didn't tell you that, you would say that I was stupid," he said.

"The boy is a very good player. In England, Sven-Goran Eriksson feels he is the best because he plays all the time."

Mourinho added: "I want to buy a left-back because I have only one of them and I always want to have two players for every position."

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger is concerned that the row may have a detrimental effect on his player.

"At the moment, our worry is to get Ashley concentrated on our next game and not on this whole story. I just feel this whole story hasn't helped us," he insisted.

GAIBANDHA CRICKET

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Abahani Krira Chakra defeated Sunrise Sporting Club by one wicket in the First Division Cricket League at the Gaibandha Stadium yesterday.

Electing to bat, Sunrise Sporting scored 140 in 50 overs. In reply, Abahani reached their target (142-9) in 42 overs.

Davenport to meet Sharapova in final

Reuters, Tokyo

Lindsay Davenport and Maria Sharapova booked a final clash at the Pan Pacific Open in Tokyo on Saturday with identical scores.

World number one Davenport beat US Open champion Svetlana Kuznetsova 6-1, 7-6 while second-seed Sharapova fought off a resilient Shinobu Asagoe by the same margin before 8,633 fans at Tokyo's Metropolitan Gymnasium.

Davenport had little trouble with Kuznetsova in the first set as she third seed scattered balls around the court, but in the second, Davenport matched the US Open champion error for error.

However, Davenport used some good serves and a double fault by her Russian opponent to leap into a 4-0 lead in the tiebreak while Kuznetsova couldn't string enough shots together to offer a challenge.

Two netted backhands saw the end of her resistance.

"She made some errors in the first set and I was able to take advantage of that," Davenport said.

"I tried to stay aggressive. This fast surface suits me better and I think that was the difference."

In the first semifinal, Japan's Asagoe, who beat Russia's Elena Dementieva in the quarters, looked out of her depth as she lost all three of her service games in the opening set.

Wimbledon champion Sharapova was sharp from the beginning and had little trouble breezing through the set using strong serves and crisp ground strokes.

In the second set, world number 32 Asagoe was a different player as she rediscovered her serve and fought tirelessly to put pressure on her Russian opponent with some long rallies.

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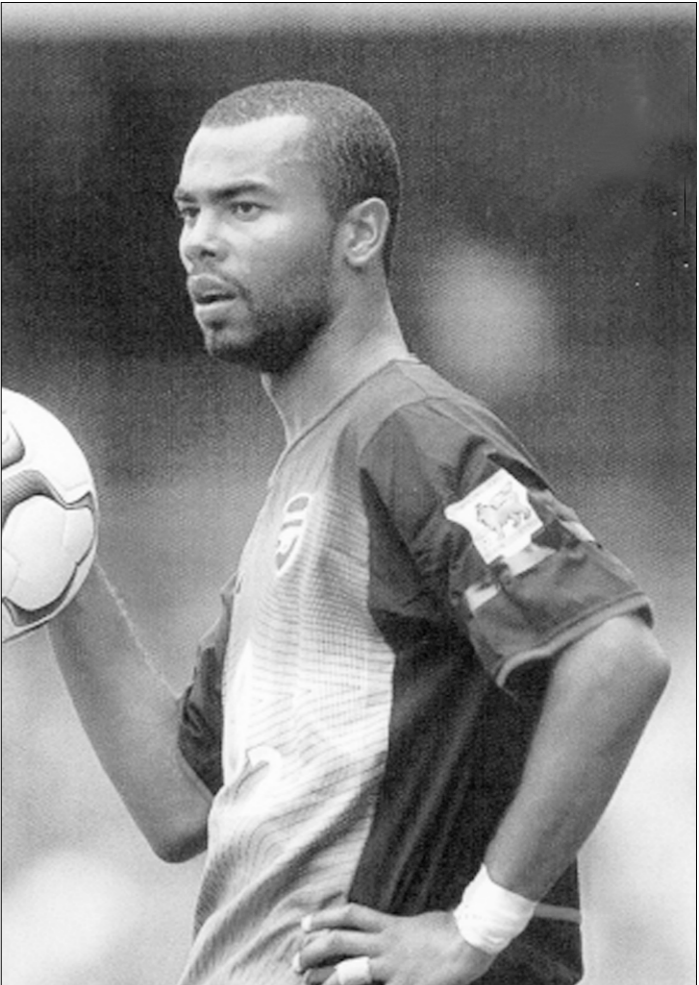
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