

Sarwan out of ODI series

AFP, Karachi

West Indian vice-captain Rammal Sarwan was on Friday ruled out of the five-match one-day series against Pakistan after suffering a hairline fracture on his right foot.

Pakistan and the West Indies play the first of five one-day matches in Rawalpindi on December 5.

The 26-year-old Guyanese will fly back to the West Indies in the next couple of days, said Khan.

Sarwan only returned to the West Indies team in the third Test after being left out of the second Test at Multan due to poor batting form.

He was batting on 35 in the pre-lunch session in the third Test when Gul's yorker hit him on the foot. He returned to the pavilion and went to hospital for an x-ray.

The West Indies next play a four-match one-day series in India in mid-January.

INTRA NSU SOCCER Batch 05 maul MBA

SPORTS REPORTER

Mushfiq, Shaon and Tanzil scored two goals each as Batch 05 crushed MBA 8-0 in the opening game of the North South University Intra-Batch Football tournament at the WAPDA ground in Banani yesterday.

Apart from the trio, Mithun and Qayum chipped in with a goal each to round off a big win.

In the other match of the day, Saaqat struck the all-important winner as Batch 04 edged past Batch 03 by a single goal.

Batch 04 will take on Batch 02 today while newcomers Batch 06 face Batch 05 in the other game at the same venue.

Shakil sinks

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182 for nine in 50 overs. Proshanto and Romen Nondy scored 41 each while Nurul Amin took four wickets for Jamalpur. But when they came to bat, seamers Biswajit Roy and Moni Baul captured three wickets each to out Jamalpur for just 71 runs.

Gopalganj rode on Lincoln's 56 to score 166 for eight in the stipulated 50 overs against Shariatpur at the Faridpur Stadium. Then Gopalganj bowled out their opponents for 120 runs, with Faruq and Shamim taking three wickets each.

Nilphamari trounced Thakurgaon by six wickets at the Dinajpur Stadium with Jaideep taking four wickets for the winners while Feni also won in similar margin against Brahmanbaria at the Chittagong Stadium with Kamaluddin producing an all-round show -- taking two wickets and scoring 36 runs.

Sidhu convicted

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He courted controversy in 1996 by deserting the Indian team during a tour of England after a spat with captain Mohammad Azharuddin.

The former cricketer's use of proverbs and clichés on TV shows has become so popular that his one-liners are known as 'Sidhuisms'.

The verdict comes just days after Sidhu's coal minister, Shibu Soren, was found guilty of conspiracy in the murder and abduction of a former aide who was allegedly blackmailing the minister in a bribery scandal.

Soren -- the first cabinet minister to be found guilty in a murder case -- could get the death penalty when the court announces the sentence Tuesday.

A day after Soren's conviction, the BJP took the government to task for giving ministerial positions to politicians facing police charges.

Lara sets sight on WC

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

West Indian captain Brian Lara put on a brave face after losing the Test series to Pakistan, saying his team's main focus now was on next year's one-day cricket World Cup in the Caribbean.

"Our performances in Test matches need improvement but in the one-day arena we played very good cricket and our main focus is now on the final at Barbados in the World Cup," said Lara.

West Indies lost the three-match series against Pakistan 2-0 on Friday.

The West Indies were bowled out for 244 runs in their second innings chasing an improbable 444-run target, handing Pakistan the third and final Test by 199 runs.

Pakistan won the first Test by nine wickets in Lahore while the second Test ended in a draw at Multan.

The West Indies, who play Pakistan in a five-match one-day series with the first match in Rawalpindi on December 5, have lost 39 of their 45 Tests abroad against major Test playing countries.

Yet they finished runners-up to Australia in the Champions Trophy one-day competition in October and earlier in a tri-series in

Malaysia.

The West Indies only have one-day matches to play until the start of the World Cup in March-April next year and Lara said they can take some positives from the Pakistan Test series.

"I think coming to Pakistan and to play a Test series you could only be positive, it's the toughest conditions but we still have some young players coming out like (Denesh) Ramdin," he said.

"We are not down in the dumps, we are moving to the one-day games and the game we play a lot better than the Test arena, and we remain positive about it," said Lara, whose team is among the favourites for the World Cup 2007.

Lara said Pakistan deserved the credit for their series win.

"Of course it's disappointing to lose a series, but you have to give credit toward the end to the Pakistanis for playing tough cricket throughout, but I'm still proud of my team."

"They worked very hard after the first match and played pretty good cricket in Multan. The pitch here didn't offer us much. Of course, Pakistan adapted to the conditions better than we did."

Lara said that his team needs to improve their fielding.

"We dropped a few chances and this is one area where we need improvement," said Lara, whose team dropped as many as dozen

catches in three Tests, including six by Mohammad Yousuf.

Yousuf accumulated 665 runs in the series and deservedly won the man-of-the-series award.

Pakistan captain Inzamam-ul-Haq said his team deserved the credit in general and Yousuf in particular.

"The team deserves the credit for every win, but Yousuf was exceptional in this series," said Inzamam, who also singled out paceman Umar Gul for his 16 wickets in the series.

"Gul bowled well on such in-conducive pitches. We were missing two of our key bowlers but Umar did well and was ably supported by Shahid Nazir and Danish Kaneria," said Inzamam, under whom Pakistan won four of their last five series.

Pakistan were without their key strike bowlers Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif, both banned over failed dope tests.

Inzamam justified keeping the same squad throughout the series -- only the second time that has happened in Pakistan's 54-year history of playing Tests. The last time was against New Zealand in 1964.

"I am being criticised for keeping the side. On such slow tracks you can't play four fast bowlers and once we won the first Test and drew the second we kept the same team," he said.

Ganguly pledges good show

PTI, Kolkata

Recalled to the Indian team after nearly a year, a confident Sourav Ganguly on Friday said he would bank on his experience of playing on bouncy tracks to come good in the three-match rubber in South Africa.

"I'm happy to be back," Ganguly told reporters, giving restrained and cautious replies to a barrage of queries thrown at him minutes after his selection to the national squad.

"My job is to go and do well. I've been playing well for ten years. I've a lot of runs behind me and experience of playing on bouncy pitches in South Africa," said the left-hander who last played in the Karachi Test in January this year.

"I have done very well in Australia where there is a lot of bounce. I have played with the same group of players earlier. I hope I can continue in the same way," he said at the Eden Gardens after a practice session with his Bengal teammates.

However, Ganguly would not turn out for the state team in the December 1-4 home fixture against Mumbai as he has been asked by the BCCI to report in Mumbai by December 3 evening ahead of his African Safari.

Asked whether he was relieved at his comeback into top-flight cricket or considered the opportunity as a challenge, Ganguly answered, "Every series is a challenge whether it is your first Test or any other series."

DAVIS CUP FINAL

Davydenko draws first blood

AFP, Moscow

Nikolay Davydenko gave Russia the first point of the Davis Cup final tie against Argentina here on Friday, beating Juan Ignacio Chela 6-1, 6-2, 5-7, 6-4.

Davydenko, the world number three, won in 3h 05min to record his first ever victory over the 27-year-old Argentinian, who had won all five of their previous meetings.

Davydenko started confidently, breaking his rival's serve early to clinch a comfortable 3-0 lead before Chela chalked up his first point in the match.

The 25-year-old Russian increased his advantage with another break in the sixth game to lift himself one set up in 37 minutes.

Blatter rules

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"For 2018, under the system of rotation of the World Cup, we can say that the bid is open and a bid by China would be welcome," said Blatter.

China took part in the 2002 World Cup in Japan and South Korea for the first time, but fared poorly and then failed to qualify for the 2006 edition in Germany.

Footballers

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time too," said the footballers referring to delays for the umpteenth time. "This is a farce and we want assurance that the transfer will begin on December 5."

Ex-national players joined the current footballers and former national captains Kazi Salahuddin and Badal Roy conveyed their support by phone. The banners and placards that were carried by the booters read: 'If hockey and cricket can be played in the midst of political rest, why not football?'

The footballers, who have decided to continue the sit-in programme everyday for one hour till the transfer starts, have also demanded resignation of the BFF officials who have 'failed to handle the situation'.

Goals not

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a long drawn out extended contract.

"As far as I know, Beckham is happy at Real," said Mijatovic, who said that the midfielder would not necessarily remain out of the starting eleven for long.

While the champions look set to come from any one of the current leading trio, fourth-placed Real Zaragoza are pushing hard on their heels just three points behind Real Madrid.

A draw at Vigo last week represented two points lost for Zaragoza, who have never won the title, but the club will look to Argentine hitman Diego Milito, joint second-top scorer in the country with Seville's Freddy Kanoute, to roll over strugglers Osasuna.

Valencia, having seen former Real Madrid forward Fernando Morientes fail to see off his former teammates last week in slumping to eighth in the table, tackle promoted Huelva hoping to end a terrible run which has brought just two points from five games.

In addition, star striker David Villa is being linked -- in the British media at least -- with a move to Chelsea.

Huelva, currently a surprise package in seventh spot, will be out to ensure they stay ahead of their illustrious visitors.



PHOTO: AFP

Pietersen caught in storm

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Kevin Pietersen has found himself at the centre of a storm after comments made in an interview with the South African edition of GQ magazine led to the South African board (CSA) writing to the ICC and England board (ECB) demanding that action be taken.

If the ICC decide there is a case to answer then he could be charged with bringing the game into disrepute, which covers inappropriate public comment. It carries penalties ranging from a ban of two to four Tests or four to eight one-day matches.

It emerged on Thursday that CSA demanded an ICC investigation, claiming that his comments amounted to accusations of racism against the country's cricket system. CSA also asked the ECB to take action against Pietersen for his constant criticism of Graeme Smith, South Africa's captain.

The South African authorities are also thought to be livid at implications made by Pietersen over match-fixing. "At the end of the day (cheating) is wrong," he was quoted as saying. "But I can see how it happens. Hansie copped a

lot more than he should have. I think he took the brunt for the players. There are a lot of people who I think that have done stuff that people don't know about and got away with it."

Pietersen's comments about the appointment of Ashwell Prince as South Africa's stand-in captain also rankled. "I just thought it was further evidence that things were going downhill ... it's got nothing to do with the colour of his skin. It's just that better players are being left out for political reasons and until that system changes, South African sport will continue to go downhill."

"I've got some mates who are now on the fringes of playing domestic cricket in South Africa who are better than three or four of those players in the South African side. I've got a very good mate who is actually a better player than me, who is now working for SA Breweries, because he can't get into the side for political reasons and that's wrong."

Pakistan clinch series

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Abdul Razzaq's removal of Jerome Taylor for one, Pakistan were left with just one wicket to take.

Razzaq then trapped Corey Collymore leg before for nought to wrap up the innings with Sarwan unable to resume. Razzaq took 2-23.

The West Indies' target was always tough as no team in history has chased more than the 418 which the West Indies achieved for the loss of seven wickets against Australia in St John's in 2003.

But it was the big-scoring Mohammad Yousuf, who deservedly won the man-of-the-match and man-of-the-series awards, who was the difference between the two teams with his 665 runs in three Tests.

Morton hit two boundaries and a six off Danish Kaneria before giving the Pakistani leg-spinner a return catch to leave the West Indies at 144-4 at lunch.

After the break, Nazir dismissed Bravo with an edge to the slips to break the stubborn fifth-wicket stand and raise hopes of a Pakistan win.

After Kaneria's double strike and

England take

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only take his word and go with it," Clark said.

England decided against playing attacking finger-spinner Panesar, despite coach Duncan Fletcher's comments this week that he was strongly considering using both spinners on an Adelaide pitch expected to take turn.

The Adelaide Oval is traditionally a high-scoring ground. The Australians amassed 500-plus in three of their last four Tests here while four batsmen scored double-centuries -- West Indies' Brian Lara (226) last year, Justin Langer (215) against New Zealand in 2004 and Ponting (242) and Indian Rahul Dravid (233) in the 2003 Test loss to India.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the fifth and final day of the third and final Test between Pakistan and the West Indies at the National Stadium in Karachi on Friday:

Pakistan: First innings 304 (Yousuf 102; Collymore 3-57)

WEST INDIES: First innings 260 (Ganga 81, Ramdin 50; Gul 4-79)

PAKISTAN: Second innings 399-6 decl (Yousuf 124, Hafeez 104, Inzamam 58 not out)

WEST INDIES: Second innings (overnight 39 for 2)

Gayle b Gul 2

Ganga lbw b Nazir 2

Lara c Malik b Gul 49

Sarwan retired hurt 35

Chanderpaul lbw b Kaneria 69

Morton c and b Kaneria 16