

Twenty20 WC

FROM PAGE 17
"Due to this tournament Pakistan, India and Australia are all facing problems with their bilateral tours this winter." Pakistan is due to tour India from first week of November to the middle of December while India has to tour Australia after the series.

"The problem is that we have to play three Tests and five one-day internationals in India and that is finalized between both boards and the venues and dates are being discussed now," the PCB official said.

Marat spitting

FROM PAGE 20
tennis in his entire life.

"He comes with the shoes that aren't even tennis shoes, and he's telling me and I'm professional and I know when it's wet and when it's not wet, and he's telling me it's not wet."

He claimed it would only have taken two or three minutes to dry out but he was forced to play on because the match was live on television.

"I'm sorry, but just two minutes doesn't make anything. So they can put on another commercial. What's the big deal?"

Roddick, who was unfazed by the commotion, said Safin was an emotional person and it was part of his game.

"I think with Marat, you know he's going to kind of go on the emotional roller coaster a little bit, but I don't know if that hurts him often," he said.

"I was just feeling like I should be even keel out there tonight. There was enough emotion in the air that I don't know if I needed to create any extra."

He said he sympathised with Safin to some extent over his concerns about the safety of the court.

"I mean, that's his right. If he doesn't feel like it's safe to play, I felt comfortable, he didn't. He's well within his rights to express that."

Sheva seeks

FROM PAGE 20
Flamini will be drafted into the midfield holding role while Gunners boss Arsene Wenger has right-back Emmanuel Eboué available again and is hopeful Dutch forward Robin van Persie will have recovered from a training ground ankle injury.

William Gallas and Freddie Ljungberg remain sidelined however while United should be at full strength for their first visit to the Emirates Stadium, where Arsenal remain unbeaten since taking up residence at their new home at the start of the season.

Viola hold

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But Arrigoni was quickly reinstated after a plea by the squad, led by captain Cristiano Lucarelli, to give him another chance.

AC Milan, whose title challenge has been hampered by an eight-point deduction for their involvement in last year's match-fixing scandal, visit Lazio.

Milan can go level with Lazio on 26 points and improve their chances of claiming the fourth and final Champions League place if they leave the capital with three points.

Del Piero

FROM PAGE 20
Jappeances for Juventus, let alone score 203 goals.

"When anyone thinks of Juve, they think of Del Piero. He is one of the few real symbols of Italian football; he is a leader and has an immensely tough character, he demonstrated that at the World Cup.

"He stayed with Juventus after they were relegated and is a shining example to the rest of the squad."

India's new

FROM PAGE 17
Ramnaresh Sarwan (foot injury) and Darren Sammy (hamstring), have picked Trinidad all-rounder Reyad Emrit for his first senior tour.

The powerful right-hander, 25, has a first-class century to his credit and has captured 57 wickets in 23 first-class domestic matches.

The remaining three one-dayers against the West Indies will be played in Cuttack (January 24), Chennai (January 27) and Vadodara (January 31).

Shoaib

FROM PAGE 17
Asif 8.5 2 34 2
Kanerla 14 3 36 3
Sami 6 1 15 1

PAKISTAN: First innings
Hafeez c Amla b Ntini 13
Farhat c de Villiers b Ntini 0
Younis not out 4
Total: (For 2 wkts in 7.2 overs) 17
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-17
To bat: Yousuf, Inzamam, Hameed, Akmal, Sami, Akhtar, Kaneria, Asif

Bowler O M R W
Nel 4 1 12 0
Ntini 3.2 2 5 2
Umpires: Billy Doctrove and Peter Parker.

Benaud to hear Gibbs plea



AFP, Dubai

Richie Benaud will hear Herschelle Gibbs's appeal against a two Test match-ban imposed upon the South Africa batsman for "racially offensive" comments during the first Test against Pakistan, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said on Thursday.

The date for the appeal, which will take place via teleconference, is still to be confirmed but it is expected to be held between the second and third Tests of the ongoing series.

Gibbs is free to play in any match scheduled to start before the announcement of former Australia captain Benaud's decision and the ICC said this meant he was available for Friday's start of the second Test in Port Elizabeth.

The third Test in Cape Town is due to start on January 26.

Since his retirement as a player in the 1960s, Benaud has become known to cricket fans around the

world as one of cricket's leading broadcasters. He is also one of the longest-serving members of the Code of Conduct commission.

Benaud, as an Appeals Commissioner, has seven days to hear and determine Gibbs's case and his decision is final and binding.

Gibbs was found guilty of a Level 3 offence under the clause of the code clause which prohibits using "any language or gestures that offends, insults, humiliates, intimidates, threatens, disparages or vilifies another person on the basis of that person's race, religion, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin."

The charge, laid by ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed, relates to an incident that took place shortly before the lunch interval on Sunday, the fourth day of the match, when Gibbs's comments regarding Pakistan supporters were overheard through a stump microphone on the ground.

At a hearing conducted by match referee Chris Broad after the

Test, which South Africa won by seven wickets, Gibbs apologised for his remarks but pleaded not guilty to the ICC charge.

The Gibbs affair has been front-page news in South Africa where a poll in The Star newspaper found that 78 per cent of people felt Gibbs's ban was unjustified and only 22 per cent thought it was fair.

The SA Cricketers' Association has leant its full support to Gibbs.

Chief executive Tony Irish said: "It is not appropriate for us to deal publicly at this stage with the merits of the appeal before the ICC."

Conflicting reports of the incidents which led to Gibbs's remarks have been published in South African newspapers.

The three spectators who were moved from seats near the boundary after allegedly swearing at bowler Paul Harris, claim Harris swore at them.

But other spectators say the Pakistani supporters were abusive and made watching the game unpleasant for people sitting near them.

'I don't walk'



BBC ONLINE, undated

Australia's Mike Hussey wore a sheepish smile after seeing his side to a one-day win over England in Brisbane.

England were convinced Hussey should have been given out caught behind on 19 but he survived and finished with 46 not out in a four-wicket victory.

"I don't walk, there's no question about it. I've been given out a few times when I haven't been out."

"If I do happen to get out and umpire doesn't give me, that's just the way the game goes," Hussey commented.

Australia would have been 103-6, chasing a target of 156, had Hussey been given after an undistinguished effort by the top order.

And acting captain Adam Gilchrist admitted they had been taught a valuable lesson.

"We were made to work for it which is probably going to hold us in good stead in keeping us sharp. It's not that we were getting complacent, but at the

halfway mark I don't think too many people expected it to go that way.

"It's a credit to England for not lying down, they certainly put in a great effort – but it's good for our guys, particularly in that middle order, to get put under pressure and come out with the points," he said.

"Tonight was valuable experience for all of us. At the top of the order, we made a few bad decisions in our shot selection, so we'll learn from that and hopefully take it forward into the rest of this competition and then to the World Cup."

Gilchrist said Hussey had taken up the "legacy" of Michael Bevan, who was Australia's middle-order finisher until the 2003 World Cup.

"He bases his game around Michael Bevan. He's perfected that sort of deft touch role, but he's also got the power game, so he can go in there and absorb pressure but he can also go in there with 10 overs left and start to clear the boundary," he added.

Despite the low scoring, Hussey said it had been a "pretty good wicket" which had a little bit in it for everyone.

"It always does a little bit more at

night here and there was still a good sheen on the ball even after 38 overs there at the end, so it is hard to get any consistency and fluency with your batting and it keeps the bowlers interested all the time.

"Maybe in one-day cricket you're trying to get on with it a little bit too much and both teams didn't assess the situation or the conditions as well as we should have," he added.

Gilchrist, meanwhile, offered words of encouragement to England debutant Mal Loye, who took on the Australian attack and made 36 at the start of their innings.

"Great intent, that's what you need at the top of the order in one-day cricket. He came out there and had a game plan that he knew, albeit a bit unorthodox but very aggressive," he said.

"I guess the more he gets exposed at this level, there's a challenge whether he'll show the conviction to keep going with that approach but he certainly put us on the back foot and we were glad to see the back of him."

Zim start preparing

CRICINFO, undated

Zimbabwe will play three warm-up one-dayers against a National Club League select side as preparations continue for the series against South Africa A and Bangladesh. The first of the three South Africa matches is on January 25 in Bulawayo, and the squad will be announced on January 23.

Ray Price could yet be in the Select side. It is still not clear whether he will make himself available for selection after his appearance for Old Hararians last Saturday. Zimbabwe's warm-ups started last week, with two teams drawn from their 30-man provisional World cup squad playing each other. National captain Prosper Uteya led one of the sides and the veteran Gary Brent the other.

"These warm-up matches are basically to wash away the holiday hang-over and recondition these guys," said national team manager Givemore Makoni. "We have picked players from the national squad, Zimbabwe A, the high-performance squad and a number of development sides, to take part in this session."

Saviola's hattrick

FROM PAGE 20
vastly different terms to his existing contract.

Such a move would represent a full 180-degree about turn from Barcelona who shipped the little Argentine out on loan the previous two seasons -- to Monaco and then Sevilla.

At the start of this season coach Frank Rijkaard said Saviola would not play as he was not part of his plans.

But with Cameroon striker Samuel Eto'o out injured since early in the season and fellow Argentine Lionel Messi missing several games, Saviola has often found himself on the bench.

Sport claim Saviola will be offered an incentive-based deal.

"His new contract could be worth between 2.5 and three million euros (a year), which will include incentives based on individual (games played, goals scored) and collective (winning the title)," said Sport.

Saviola was signed in 2001 and his current deal is due to run out at the end of the season.

He was a regular starter in his first three seasons but the goals dried up and he was loaned out during Barca's last two championship-winning campaigns.

Madrid dumped

FROM PAGE 20
before Ivan Helguera had his 88th-minute header ruled out by an offside flag.

That resulted in a torrent of projectiles being thrown down towards the assistant referee involved as the Madrid fans vented their frustrations.

Another object was later thrown at Doblas, which the referee handed to the fourth official, while players and officials were involved in a melee in the dying minutes as an action-packed match threatened to boil over.

On the pitch, Madrid continued to press for what would have been a last-gasp winner, but Betis, with their time-wasting tactics and blanket defending, held firm to dump out the hosts.

Mutiny at Real

FROM PAGE 20
The grilling came after Calderon, addressing a gathering of law students on Tuesday, had rubbished some members of his team in remarks made public by a Spanish radio station.

He suggested David Beckham was heading off to Los Angeles Galaxy in the United States to become a "second rate actor" and that Guti, "at 31 was still a junior" and that in general his team wasn't especially civilised.

He later apologised "a thousand times" for his indiscreet observations on Real Madrid TV.

But according to Sport newspaper the players listened to Calderon "with indifference".

"Nobody believed he was sorry for what he said," Sport claimed.

The players have planned a press conference on Friday to state publicly their feelings over their boss's remarks.

Sammy out

FROM PAGE 17
Tendulkar and (Rahul) Dravid and hopefully getting them out," he said.

Emrit, a powerful right-hander, has a highest first-class score of 112, his only century at that level.

He has also captured 57 first-class wickets from 23 matches.

He has been named in the provisional 30 for the World Cup and is hopeful of cementing his place in the squad with a strong showing in India.

"My first goal is to get selected in final 11 and then do what I have been doing all the time and that is getting wickets and scoring runs consistently," he said.

"I also see this as a good opportunity to secure a spot in the World Cup."

Lara eyes domination



CRICINFO, undated

If familiarity breeds contempt, Brian Lara and Rahul Dravid might as well vent their anger in a boxing ring. Over the last nine months West Indies and India have run into each other at various corners. It started with the series in the Caribbean, followed by a whistle-stop at Kuala Lumpur and ended with a knockout clash at Ahmedabad in the Champions Trophy.

The scoreline is currently 6-2 in West Indies' favour and Lara had no qualms in admitting that his side started this series, a rehearsal for the World Cup, with a "psychological advantage".

Ever since Dwayne Bravo floated a slower ball to Yuvraj Singh to level the series in the Caribbean at 1-1, West Indies have had India's number.

"It is a confidence booster," said Lara when asked about his side's recent record against India, "but it's also an opportunity for India to get back. India weren't as successful in

the ODIs in South Africa so it's a chance for them to bounce back. We have the psychological advantage and want to continue with it. We want to stay dominant over India.

"We're motivated enough to stay on top. We are committed to playing good one-day cricket close to the World Cup. We entered two finals in 2006 but unfortunately ended up losing both to Australia. We need to ensure more consistency. That's what we're looking to do over the next four games."

It's a curious state of affairs when the hosts of the World Cup need to gear up for the event in the opposite corner of the world. But Lara preferred to highlight the positive.

"It would have been much better if India came to the West Indies. The conditions there would have helped their preparations. But we need some international cricket. Our last series was in Pakistan in December. We weren't able to get our full team here -- (Ramnaresh) Sarwan and (Corey) Collimore aren't here -- but it provides a chance for a few players.

"A few days ago, we weren't sure if the series was on. That

would have been a disappointment. It's important we get some rest after this series, before the World Cup. I don't see it as a disadvantage. It's good we can come out here, play in conditions not too far away from West Indies, play against a very good team, head back home and prepare for the World Cup."

West Indies' previous assignment was in Pakistan, against a side they will meet in the first round of the World Cup. Things didn't go according to plan but Lara spoke about the heartening aspects. "We'd like to have won the Pakistan series," he continued, "but we had a couple of players who came to the fore. Lendl Simmons had a couple of good innings and Marlon Samuels scored a great century in the only game we won."

"We've been forced to make a few changes here. We have Rayad Emrit playing ODIs for the first time. Dwayne Smith has an opportunity with Darren Sammy pulling out. It's a last lap in terms of preparations and we're going to ensure that everyone gets an opportunity to stake their claim for the WC."

Freddie hails bowlers



BBC ONLINE, undated

England captain Andrew Flintoff said his side were 40 runs short of pushing Australia even harder in their one-day international in Brisbane.

Australia won by four wickets after falling to 108-6 in pursuit of 156.

"You can't fault the second half, the way we started with the ball was fantastic," said Flintoff.

"But the first innings cost us. If we had got close to 200 it could have been a different game. To beat

Australia we have to get both disciplines in order."

He added: "The Australians bowled well, they put it in good areas and we probably showed a bit of inexperience with our batting. We could have stuck in for a bit longer."

"The bowling was good here and in Melbourne we battled alright -- we just have to get a combination of the two of them now."

The England skipper was full of praise for debutant batsman Mal Loye and fast bowler James Anderson, both county teammates at Lancashire.

The 34-year-old was drafted into

the squad after Kevin Pietersen's rib injury.

"It's not easy coming from first-class cricket in New Zealand and to be thrown into a one-day international against Brett Lee and Glenn McGrath," Flintoff said.

"He didn't look out of place and was a real plus."

"Mal has performed at county level for Lancashire, is highly rated within our county, and with performances like that hopefully he can kick on and score big scores for us."

"Jimmy has come back from injury and over the past few weeks something has clicked with him."



PHOTO: COURTESY

Vice-president of Kurmitola Golf Club (KGC) major general Iqbal Karim Bhuiyan, psc (C) poses in the inauguration ceremony of the Square Golf tournament at the KGC course on Thursday.

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