



CEO of Asian Cricket Council Syed Ashraful Huq (C) speaks while selectors Chetan Chauhan and Mohsin Khan (R) listen during a press conference to declare the Asia squad for the Afro-Asia Cup at a local hotel yesterday.

Rafique

FROM PAGE 17

out citing a busy international schedule while Ganguly's age went against him.

The selectors, interestingly, had little explanation for Mashrafe's non-show in the main side. The leading ODI wicket-taker in 2006, the speedster was instrumental in Bangladesh's fantastic World Cup campaign but he was only considered for the Twenty20 fixture.

The total prize money for the tournament is US dollars 100,000, with the winners of each match getting \$25,000. Man of the Match would get \$5,000 while the Man of the Series stands to get \$15,000.

Former India allrounder and World Cup winner Roger Binny has been named coach of the Asia XI while Sultan Rana will be the manager. India's Australian physiotherapist John Gloster will work for both sides.

This will be the second edition of the tournament -- it was first held in 2005 in South Africa. The series was drawn 1-1 with one game being abandoned owing to rain.

SL wants elected body for cricket

APP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's sports minister said Friday he wants a new committee elected to run the island's cricket administration, which is currently managed by political appointees.

"I need to hold elections not only for cricket, but all other sports bodies that are currently governed by interim committees," Sports Minister Gaminu Lokuge told APP.

Sri Lanka Cricket is under an interim committee appointed by Lokuge's predecessor, Jeewan Kumaraatunga, in March 2005. That was the third time since 1999 that the government had intervened to appoint panels to oversee the cash-rich cricket administration.

Lokuge said that holding an election could take time as there were outstanding issues but he did not elaborate.

"I want to hold elections as soon as it is legally possible to do so," he said.

Sri Lanka Cricket has been embroiled in a complicated legal process ever since former president Tilanga Sumathipala's executive committee filed suit in March 2005 to block an order to dismiss his administration on grounds of mismanagement.

The International Cricket Council in April 2005 recognised the incumbent interim committee headed by businessman Jayantha Dharmadasa as the lawfully appointed body empowered to conduct the affairs of Sri Lanka Cricket.

Philippoussis in US reality show

APP, Sydney

Two-time Grand Slam finalist Mark Philippoussis is reportedly set to become the star of a US reality television show as his tennis career continues to hit the skids.

The Las Vegas-based Australian, who has slipped to 138 in the world rankings after a series of injuries, will be the star of a show called "Age of Love", the US celebrity magazine People reported on its website.

The show will feature the 30-year-old dating two groups of women, one aged in their 20s, known as "the kittens", and the other in their 40s, called "the cougars".

Philippoussis, whose off-court exploits have often prompted critics in Australia to accuse him of wasting a talent that once made him world number eight, said he was just "a simple guy who wants a simple girl."

"Age doesn't matter to me -- all the women are beautiful," Philippoussis told People.

"Until now, the oldest woman I've ever gone out with was four years younger than me."

Aussies in Azlan Shah final

Hockey

PTI, Ipooh

Olympic champions Australia extended their supremacy over Asian Games gold medallists Korea scripting a 6-2 win to enter the final of the 16th Sultan Azlan Shah Cup eight-nation hockey tournament, here today.

It was Australia's fourth consecutive entry into the final of this tournament that they have won as many times and a repeat of last year's World Cup semi-final that the Aussies had won 4-2.

Goals by Desmond Abbot (9th,

69th), Andrew Smith (22nd), Liam Deyoung (37th), Eli Matheson (51st) and Grant Schubert (60th) set up the Aussie victory while Korean replies came from Jeong Yoon Sang (11th) and Lee Sung Min (57th).

As the scoreline suggested, the Australians were a far superior side as they played a brilliant tactical game to check the Koreans whose shaky defence on the night was cruelly exposed their ruthless opponents.

Barring the lone penalty corner they conceded, the Australians maintained a vice-grip on the first-half proceedings that had the Koreans pinned

in their own half.

The Australians were superbly organised in the midfield where they had the Korean schemers under close scrutiny. Consequently, the Koreans could barely make a pass before an Australian was on the ball.

The scoring began in the ninth minute when Abbott swept home a clearance by goalkeeper Lee Myung Ho who had blocked Deyoung's try off a Bevan George free-kick.

The Koreans retaliated and forced a penalty corner against the run of play with Sang finding the net with a powerful drag-flick for the equaliser in the 11th. PTI

Landis in shock Armstrong claim

Cycling

APP, Los Angeles

Emboldened Tour de France champion Floyd Landis said Thursday that US anti-doping officials offered early in his case to go easy on him if he provided evidence incriminating former champ Lance Armstrong. "That took place in the first conversation between USADA (the US Anti-Doping Agency) and my lawyer," Landis said at a press conference looking ahead to the start of his arbitration hearing on Monday.

"It was offered to me that if I give up something on Lance Armstrong to incriminate him, I would serve the lightest possible suspension," Landis said. The American, who is battling to keep his 2006 Tour de France title, said he thought the offer showed a cynicism that has affected the entire anti-doping process.

"I do find it to be offensive. And I think it goes to the character of the prosecution," said Landis, who

added that in any case he had no information to offer on the subject of doping and Armstrong -- the seven-time winner of the world's most prestigious cycle race who has vehemently denied accusations of doping.

USADA could not immediately be reached for comment. The agency's standard policy is not to comment on open cases.

Landis said he didn't expect the subject to arise during his hearing before a three-man panel of the American Arbitration Association, which is expected to last 10 days.

"We would wish the hearing would be about science and about a doping case," he said. "This is what I've been accused of."

Landis and his advisers argue that the French laboratory that found an unusually high level of testosterone in his sample after the stunning stage 17 triumph that keyed his Tour victory failed to follow proper procedures in handling the samples.

"All I can hope for, really, is that the three arbitrators will listen to the facts in the case," he said.

Dhoni savours knock

PTI, Dhaka

Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who defied cramps to fashion an Indian victory in the first of the three-match one-day cricket series against Bangladesh, yesterday termed his unbeaten 91 as one of the most memorable innings of his career.

Dhoni fought a cramped right hamstring to take his team home with a fine 107-run unfinished partnership with Dinesh Kaarthik (58), as India scored a five-wicket win to go one up in the series.

Asked if the knock signalled his return to form after some average performances at the World Cup, he said "I would not like to link this with anything." When a scribe asked him to compare the knock with the innings of 183 (against Sri Lanka) and 147 (against Pakistan) earlier in his career, he said "I don't like to compare but this is one I would rate with the one against Zimbabwe (in 2005) when India were down to five wickets for some 100 odd runs." Referring to his cramps, Dhoni, who was adjudged man of the match, said "I had enormous pain in my right leg. But I knew I had to carry on. It's not easy to bat under those hot conditions.

"Let's draw a line under everybody, let's start again and build for a solid future."

Flintoff captained England during Vaughan's injury absences in India, at the beginning of 2006 in a drawn Test series as well as the 5-0 trouncing in the Ashes series.

Strauss deputised last summer when both Vaughan and Flintoff were out and led England to a 3-0 Test win against Pakistan.

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