

Reefat shares lead with 4 foreigners

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladeshi Grand Master Reefat Bin Sattar regained momentum in the title race in the 8th United Insurance and United Leasing Grandmasters Chess Tournament when he joined Iranian GM Ghaem Maghami Ehsan, GM Nguyen Anh Dung of Vietnam and Indian IM PDS Girinath atop the table after the seventh round yesterday.

Reefat beat local IM Abdullah Al Rakib at the NSC conference room to raise his tally to five points while Ghaem drew with Nguyen and Girinath beat IM Enamul Hossain Rajib.

Local FIDE Masters Sufian Shakil and Sheikh Nasir Ahmed and Pakistani International Master Mahmood Lodhi followed the leaders with 4.5 points each.

Nasir drew with GM Gopal of India, Lodhi beat Lalith Babu and Shakil beat Monir Hossain.

ICC tweaks Powerplay rule

CRICINFO, undated

Teams will be allowed an additional fielder outside the 30-yard circle during the second or third Powerplay, the International Cricket Council's Cricket Committee has recommended after their two-day meeting in Dubai.

The committee, chaired by former Indian captain Sunil Gavaskar, came up with a number of recommendations on issues related to ODI regulations, ball tampering, glue on pitches, volume of cricket, international umpiring and the role of the television umpire.

While they felt that the use of Powerplays should continue they resolved that an additional fielder (making three in total instead of the current limit of two) should be allowed outside the outer ring during either of the last two Powerplays. Also it was decided to try out the idea of the captain of the batting side being able to choose when to take one of the Powerplays. It is set to be trialled in Australia; any other member country wanting try out the new rule was also permitted to do so.

The committee came up with a number of recommendations with relation to ball tampering and stated that the following actions shall not be permitted: deliberately throwing the ball into the ground for purposes of roughing it up, applying any artificial substance to the ball and applying any non-artificial substance for any purpose other than to polish the ball, lifting or otherwise interfering with any of the seams of the ball, and scratching the surface of the ball with finger or thumb nails or any implement.

The use of adhesives in the preparation of pitches for international matches should be discontinued, the committee ruled. Polyvinyl Acetate adhesives had been used during last year's Champions Trophy in India for the purpose of holding the pitches together.

T20 games in Toronto

CRICINFO, undated

Toronto could host a Twenty20 tournament involving Pakistan, West Indies and Canada in August. If plans go ahead, the teams will play some warm-up matches ahead of the Twenty20 World Cup in South Africa the following month.

Contrary to other reports, however, nothing has been set in stone. A spokesman for the Canada board told Cricinfo there had been preliminary discussions with the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB). "The CCA is most certainly supportive of the proposed event," he said, "particularly as we believe the 20/20 format is ideal for the North American market which is geared to three-hour Major League Baseball games.

"But, as yet, nothing is finalised. The prime consideration is the securing of global television rights -- which are not yet in place."

The CCA had held preliminary discussions with the WICB in the early part of 2007 and it is understood that the WICB has also been in contact with Pakistan's board about the same event.

The tournament would have many benefits, not least for West Indies and Pakistan on a playing level. Pakistan have only played two Twenty20 matches to date, while West Indies have only played one.

Canada haven't played any, nor are they in the World Cup, but they would benefit financially. Another plus for them is that cricket in North America would be promoted at the same time.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladeshi IM Enamul Hossain Rajib (L) and Girinath of India concentrate on their moves during their board of the United Leasing and Insurance Grand Masters' chess tournament at the NSC conference room yesterday.

Younis not considered

CRICINFO, undated

Younis Khan is unlikely to captain Pakistan, not at least under the current administration. Younis declined the captaincy when it was offered to him after the World Cup, the second time he had walked away from the position in the last seven months.

Younis had been Pakistan's vice-captain for the two years leading into the Caribbean tournament and was widely expected to take over the lead role from Inzamam-ul-Haq. He was eventually convinced to lead Pakistan during the Champions Trophy last year by Nasim Ashraf, the board chairman, after having walked away from the post the previous day. He was the preferred choice of many, including Ashraf before Shoaib Malik was appointed.

While fully backing Malik's appointment, Ashraf expressed his disappointment at Younis's decision to scupper the board's succession plan. "To be honest, yes (I was disappointed)," he told Cricinfo.

Samuels in for Sarwan

CRICINFO, undated

BBC ONLINE, undated

West Indies have called up batsman Marlon Samuels to replace injured Ramnaresh Sarwan for the remainder of the Test series in England.

Sarwan is returning home after hurting his shoulder while fielding during the second Test defeat at Headingley.

Vice-captain Daren Ganga is set to take over as skipper and Samuels will fill the gap in the middle order batting.

He was a surprise omission from the original squad but has a modest Test record, averaging 28 after 23 matches.

The 26-year-old Jamaican has failed to build on the promise shown when he made 104 against India in Calcutta five years ago.

He is, however, a regular in the West Indies one-day side and the selectors hope he now has the maturity to help plug the gap left by Sarwan's injury and the retirement of Brian Lara.

The squad for two Twenty20 internationals against England and

Sarwan terms situation sad

CRICINFO, undated

Ramnaresh Sarwan described West Indies' mammoth loss at Headingley as "really sad" and said the players needed to be in a better frame of mind to challenge England at Old Trafford next week. However, he was confident the squad had enough fight in them to put up a decent contest.

"It (Headingley) was really sad," Sarwan told The Nation. "We're making history for the wrong reasons. It was disappointing to know that I couldn't go out there and help the guys. Having said that, I think they've got a lot of fight in them. I'm sure they're going to give a better performance in the third Test match."

The team's loss by an innings and 283 runs was their heaviest defeat in

"Younis had been groomed for this position and he also deserved an automatic place in the team, just like Shoaib Malik," he added. "Younis has got leadership quality and it was part of a succession plan that the board had put in place. When he did that after the World Cup, I think it was because of personally taking that performance to heart too much and he was mentally I think depressed about it."

By suggesting that Malik could remain captain for the next three World Cups, Ashraf has seemingly closed the door on Younis returning as captain at least under his tenure.

Since the decision, Younis has been playing for Yorkshire, choosing to make himself unavailable for the Abu Dhabi series against Sri Lanka. His refusal to play in the three-match series and be unavailable till September for Pakistan, while turning out for a county side, irked the PCB officials.

But Ashraf asserted that though he will appear for Pakistan again, he won't lead them. "Obviously he won't be captain, that has been decided. But in terms of playing I hope that he makes himself available and that he continues to play

for Pakistan."

Ashraf revealed that Younis had sought, and been granted, permission to be unavailable till September, but added, "I want to also make it clear that people have to make themselves available first for Pakistan and then for anything else."

Ashraf also cleared up the confusion surrounding Shoaib Akhtar's withdrawal from the Afro-Asia Cup. Shoaib had initially said he was keen and fit to play for the Asia squad, though he had also preferred to skip the Abu Dhabi series. He was subsequently dropped from the Asia side on fitness grounds and Ashraf confirmed that the Shoaib was not fully fit yet.

"If anybody is not fit to play for Pakistan they are not fit to play elsewhere. Shoaib Akhtar had told me he was not fit to play in Abu Dhabi. He told me that he would be fit by September and that is a great motive for him. We didn't want him to get injured in the Afro-Asia tournament. But our policy is very clear: if you are not fit to play for Pakistan you cannot play anywhere else."

Cremer leaves club in lurch

CRICINFO, undated

Zimbabwe's Graeme Cremer has been slammed by an Oxfordshire club side after he failed to honour an agreement to play for them this summer.

According to the Oxford Mail, Cremer had signed a contract to play and coach at Aston Rowant and was due to make his debut this weekend. But when club officials tried to contact him to confirm travel arrangements, they received a text message from Cremer saying he was no longer coming.

Paul Humphreys, Aston Rowant's captain, told the newspaper that the club was considering writing to the ICC for advice. "I've been told that there is no point in going to Zimbabwe Cricket because we won't get anything out of them," said Humphreys. "We could take it up with him because he has already broken his contract. We are out of pocket as a club and it is hugely frustrating for us."

"It's a bit of a muddle. We've been trying to get to the bottom of it. Two weeks ago he was selected to play for Zimbabwe A after being out of favour for a couple of years. Because he had already signed for us, he said it would be beneficial for him to play in the UK."

But Zimbabwe Cricket is blocking its cricketers from playing abroad, and all those who took part in the World Cup were forced to sign contracts agreeing not to seek overseas employment or they would have been dropped. Last summer several players, including Terry Duffin and Ed Rainsford, played for UK clubs.

Cremer did not sign such a contract, but it seems he changed his mind about playing for Aston Rowant once he was picked to represent Zimbabwe A against a touring Kenya Select XI. It is reported that he was told in no uncertain terms by Ozias Bvute, ZC's managing director, that if he joined an English club then he was finished as far as Zimbabwe cricket was concerned.

However, Cricinfo has learned that Cremer failed to advise the club even though he knew he would not be coming more than a week before he texted them. "I just checked with him on Wednesday that he was OK," Humphreys said.

Sinclair could leave NZ

CRICINFO, undated

Mathew Sinclair is considering a move to England, Australia or South Africa after being dumped from New Zealand's list of contracted players for the second time. Sinclair is one of only three New Zealand batsmen to have scored two or more Test double-centuries but he was overlooked in the 20-man squad as the selectors instead chose a backup wicketkeeper, Gareth Hopkins.

Sinclair had been on the outer since losing his national contract in 2005 but regained it last year and was recalled to the Test side for the home series against Sri Lanka in December. It was Sinclair's first taste of Test cricket since late 2004 and although he made only 36, 4, 6 and 37, he was not expecting to be discarded so soon.

"Obviously, with the big workload of Tests ahead, it did surprise me," Sinclair told the New Zealand Herald. "I thought if I was the incumbent, possibly they would carry on with me. As I've just found out, nothing's guaranteed. I'd love to be able to carry on here, but deep down I feel that's it for me."

Because Sinclair, 31, is considered a Test-only batsman, he was always going to struggle to earn enough points in New Zealand's ranking system when many players are viewed as Test and one-day cricketers. Sinclair, who was born in Australia, is now considering his options.

"I've been scarred twice now by the selectors and I really don't see much of a future for me here," Sinclair said in The Press. "I guess it's time to start thinking seriously about my future and whether I want to continue playing cricket and I'm sure the general public would understand that."

Although he has a respectable Test record of 1448 runs at 35.31, Sinclair's domestic season in 2006-07 was disappointing. He managed only 375 runs at 34.09 for Central Districts in the State Championship.

Inzy days over?

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"Inzamam will certainly get a central contract if he is among the shortlist finalised by the selectors," Naqmi said on Friday.

"The selectors will give us at least 30 names and we will then pick the best 20 for the year old new contracts," he said, adding the new contracts would be approved by the board's ad-hoc committee at a meeting in Bhurban on June 16 and would be given out by July 1st.

Inzamam announced his retirement from one-day internationals and stepped down as captain after Pakistan were eliminated in the first round of the World Cup. The 37-year-old, however, expressed his wish to continue playing Test cricket.

To be

FROM PAGE 17

is likely to appoint two local coaches.

Former national coach Sarwar Imran and ex-national cricketer Dipu Roy Chowdhury are leading the race.

BCB has to go for temporary solution for the coming tour as it has yet to confirm a foreign coach to succeed Whatmore.

The national camp for the series will start from June 7, three days after the announcement of the team. The Tigers are expected to fly to Colombo on June 17.

No Tests for Zimbabwe

CRICINFO, undated

BBC ONLINE, undated

Zimbabwe should not be allowed to return to Test cricket until the team improves its standard of performance.

The ICC's Cricket Committee concluded that to allow Zimbabwe to resume five-day matches risked "undermining the integrity of Test cricket".

And the committee, meeting in Dubai, recommended the scheduling of four-day games against national A teams.

It also suggested Zimbabwe be included in the next ICC Intercontinental Cup, which was recently won by Ireland.

The Cricket Committee is chaired by former India captain

Sunil Gavaskar and includes a number of other high-profile members, including Sri Lanka skipper Mahela Jayawardene, former Australia captain Mark Taylor, ex-West Indies paceman Michael Holding and top umpire Simon Taufel.

But its recommendations in relation to Zimbabwe have still to be ratified by the full ICC Board and the Chief Executive's Committee when they met in London next month.

Zimbabwe have not played Tests since September 2005 but are still permitted to take part in one-day internationals, including the recent World Cup in the Caribbean.

However, the MCC's World Cricket Committee recently called for Zimbabwe's one-day status to be suspended as well.

"Once the social unrest has been addressed, the ICC should assist

Zimbabwe in rebuilding as a serious cricket nation," said a statement.

"While it is not for the committee to make judgements on the politics of any particular country, we believe that the decline in the standard of cricket in Zimbabwe is directly related to the political situation there."

"An improvement is unlikely while the current regime is in place."

The MCC (Marylebone Cricket Club) committee was set up to discuss global cricket issues but has no legislative power in the game.

The MCC, founded in 1787, is responsible for safeguarding cricket's rules and spirit, though the world game is run by the ICC (International Cricket Council).

Gilchrist ponders ODI career

CRICINFO, undated

AFP, Sydney

Australian vice-captain Adam Gilchrist says he is considering retiring from one-day cricket to extend his Test career.

Although keen to continue playing one-day international cricket in the short term, Gilchrist conceded that the birth of his third child, coupled with cricket's demanding schedule, has prompted him to consider only playing Tests.

"Up until the last 12 months, I had never been a guy to consider phasing out one form of the game and just focusing on one," Gilchrist told Friday's Sydney Morning Herald.

"But I am open to thinking about that now. I have been quite firm on playing both forms in the past, but I guess that things have changed a little."

"When a few of the guys started retiring last year, it made me stop and reflect on where I was at personally."

"And, while the appetite is still very strong to keep playing, I've just noticed the hunger and the drive for Test cricket that guys like Warney (Shane Warne) and Justin Langer had when they didn't have one-day cricket to consider."

The 35-year-old Gilchrist said becoming a father again was also a factor.

"For me, too, I am entering another phase in my life with our third child," he told the newspaper.

"There is a lot of cricket coming up over the next three years, so there are things to consider."

"That's not to say that I am announcing right now that I am retiring from one-day cricket, but it's just that I am more open-minded about the issue these days."

Gilchrist remains among the one-day game's leading entertainers, as proved by his pulsating century in this year's World Cup final against Sri Lanka.

He is likely to play limited-overs cricket through a seven-match tour of India later this year, the inaugural Twenty20 World Cup and the

Australian summer.

But beyond that, Gilchrist's involvement with the Australian one-day side is not so certain, the newspaper said.

With Australia set to play 20 Tests next year, Australia's leading cricketers face the most gruelling schedule attempted by an Australian team.

Following the World Cup win in the Caribbean in April, Australia's challenge now will be to maintain its Test supremacy in the wake of the retirements of Warne, Langer, Glenn McGrath and Damien Martyn, as well as coach John Buchanan.

"The trick will be to manage the workload in consultation with the captain, the selectors and Cricket Australia," Gilchrist said.

Gilchrist has played 90 Tests since 1999, scoring 5,353 runs including 17 centuries and in 268 one-day internationals has scored 9,038 runs with 15 hundreds.

Lloyd's faith on Flintoff

CRICINFO, undated

AFP, London

Former England coach David Lloyd believes Andrew Flintoff will overcome his latest ankle injury setback and return as a fully-fledged all-rounder later this summer.

The 29-year-old Lancastrian's ability to perform with bat and ball at the highest level has been compromised by the latest in a series of ankle injuries, which has ruled him out of the current Test series against

West Indies.

Flintoff is due to have an exploratory operation on his left ankle this weekend to determine the extent of the damage, although some critics already claim he may never again be able to function as a top-class all-rounder.

But Lloyd, Flintoff's former Lancashire coach and now a Sky Sports commentator, believes he has the drive and determination to return and perform in with bat, ball and in the field.

"I don't think he's changed at all from when I first met him as a teen-

ager -- he's always been very determined," said Lloyd, who signed Flintoff for Lancashire back in 1994.

"I think he'll be fine. He has got an injury that is just lingering and I think he'll come back as an all-rounder because that's what he is."

"People say he's a bowler who bats a bit these days, but that's rubbish -- he's an all-rounder. I'm sure he'll want to come back and be in the game all the time."

"He wants to bowl, he wants to bat, he wants to field, he wants to be involved at every opportunity and I don't think he would want to have just one aspect of the game to concentrate on."

Flintoff made a successful return from an ankle injury in 2005; becoming man of the series during England's triumphant Ashes series and Lloyd is expecting a similar response this time.

"When he's come back before, he's always come back faster and fitter than before and I've no doubt that will happen this time, it's just that this injury is lingering a bit," he said.

Harvey kept waiting

BBC ONLINE, undated

The saga over Ian Harvey's application to play as a non-overseas Derbyshire player continued with the England and Wales Cricket Board standing firm.

A drink-driving conviction had delayed Harvey's British citizenship.

And the ECB said in a statement on Thursday: "While sympathetic, the board has reconfirmed its ruling."

Derbyshire have no room on their overseas quota as their side already includes skipper Simon Katich and another Aussie batsman, Travis Birt.

The club argue that Harvey is being punished for pleading guilty to the drink-driving offence.

"Ian was very honest about the drink-driving charge, he admitted his mistake immediately, was very remorseful and the matter was dealt with internally at the time," said chief executive Tom Sears earlier in May.

"Ian is an honest and upfront person and by admitting his mistake, showing integrity and pleading guilty he has paid an additional price."

"To us as a club it doesn't seem right to receive what amounts to an additional punishment."

Derbyshire had appealed to the ECB, pointing to the precedent set by the governing body's decision to allow Ottis Gibson to play for Leicestershire in 2004 while awaiting British citizenship.

Harvey has played in England since 1999 and is married to a British citizen and completed the required four years of residency.

will have to be careful," he said.

"He had a strong indoors season, won the title in Rotterdam. Last year he made the US Open semi-finals. He's a fantastic player."

Others into the fourth round were rising Argentine claycourter Juan Monaco and Paul-Henri Mathieu who won an all-French clash against Gilles Simon.

Women's top seed and defending champion Justine Henin of Belgium was scheduled later in the day to take on tall Italian Mara Santangelo, a player she has beaten four times out of four.

Also on the agenda were Serena Williams against Michaela Krajicek of the Netherlands and men's fourth seed Nikolay Davydenko of Russia facing the challenge of French hope Michael Llodra.

Also into the last 16 was 29-year-old Tathiana Garbin of Italy who reached the fourth round of a Grand Slam event for the first time at her 28th attempt with a 6-3, 6-0 win over France's Stephanie Cohen-Aloro.

Nicole Pietrangeli, the sixth seed, defeated Australia's Samantha Stosur in straight sets to reach the last 16 for the second year in a row.

Li Na was the last Chinese player to fall in Paris going down tamely 6-4, 6-3 to Austrian 20th seed Sybille Bammer.

Youzhny made it through to face Federer by outlasting 2003 champion Juan Carlos Ferrero of Spain 6-7 (3/7), 7-6 (7/3), 6-2, 6-2.

Federer has won all nine matches he has played against Youzhny, but he insisted he would not make the mistake of underestimating his opponent.

"Although I have never lost to him, I have a lot of respect for his game. I like the way he plays, so I