

Lankan duo for Ind-Eng

PTI, Dubai

Sri Lanka's Ranjan Madugalle and Roshan Mahanama have been appointed match referees for the upcoming Test and ODI cricket series between India and England this month.

While Madugalle will oversee the three-match Test series starting July 19 in London, Mahanama will be in-charge of the seven ODIs, the International Cricket Council said in a statement.

Australian umpire Simon Taufel and West Indian Steve Bucknor will stand in the first Test to be played from July 19 to 23 at the Lord's.

Taufel and South African Ian Howell will umpire the second Test, at Trent Bridge from July 27 to 31. The third and final Test, at The Oval from August 9 to 13, will be officiated by Bucknor and Howell.

West Indian Billy Doctrove will supervise the first three ODIs on August 21, 24 and 27, while Pakistan's Aleem Dar will stand in the last four matches to be played on August 30 and September 2, 5 and 8 along with umpires selected by the host board.

Before taking on England in the one-day series, India will travel to Glasgow for an ODI against Scotland on August 16.

Madugalle will be the match referee, while Howell and Ian Gould will be the umpires for this one-off tie.

Meanwhile, Jagaval Srinath has been appointed match referee for the three-match ODI series between Zimbabwe and South Africa from August 22 to 26.

Nimbus to distribute on its own

PTI, New Delhi

Private sports broadcaster Nimbus, which holds telecast rights of cricket matches featuring India till 2010, on Wednesday said it would launch an independent bouquet for distributing content to cable and other TV platforms.

The announcement puts to rest speculation that Nimbus was working on a distribution deal with Sony Entertainment Television, after an agreement with Star India was called off.

Nimbus' efforts to reach a distribution deal failed after the government issued an ordinance making it mandatory for the private broadcaster to share feed with public broadcaster Doordarshan, ending any exclusivity it enjoyed.

"The independent distribution route will allow us a rapid ramp up, better long term control and superior revenue accumulation. For the next 2-3 months, the focus will be on getting maximum distribution reach for Neo Sports and Neo Sports Plus," Neo Sports CEO Shashi Kalathil said in a statement.

Former Zee Turner CEO Arun Poddar has been appointed President (Sales) for Neo Sports.

Kalathil said the bouquet will be expanded on the basis of considerable interest and the best option in the Indian environment is to extract revenues from the cable TV distribution team.

India remain buoyant

PTI, London

Buoyed by their Future Cup series victory against the formidable South Africans, the Indian cricket team arrived here from Glasgow to commence the testing tour of England that starts with a warm-up match against Sussex at Hove from July 7.

Senior players Anil Kumble and VVS Laxman and opener Wasim Jaffer -- all of whom arrived here on Tuesday, have joined the team. Ishant Sharma and Ranadeb Bose, the pace bowlers picked for the Test series, are already with the squad.

India recorded their first-ever one-day series triumph against the Proteas in the three-match series in Belfast. Their one-off tie against Pakistan in Glasgow for the Friendship Cup, however, was washed out without a ball being bowled.

Thanks to heavy rain and biting cold, the Indian experienced some extremely difficult conditions in Belfast which will come in handy during their tough tour of England.

Dhaka set final

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virtue of better goal difference while BKSP, who had completed on seven points and needed one of the two finalists to lose yesterday and make way for the Savar sport institute, ended clinched third place in the five-team super league.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the second day of the second Test between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka at the P Sara Stadium in Colombo on Wednesday:

BANGLADESH: First innings: 62 (Saleh 21; Malinga 4-25,



PHOTO: AFP

West Indies batsman Runako Morton (C) disputes with England fast bowler James Anderson (L) as umpire Brian Jerling tries to separate the duo during the second one-day international at Edgbaston in Birmingham on Wednesday.

Shedding the rust

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

"I want to share this award with Yuvraj Singh," said a beaming Sachin Tendulkar after he was named the Man of the Series in the Future Cup, India's three-match series against South Africa at Belfast. "Had it not been for Yuvraj, we wouldn't have won the last two games."

Yuvraj could well have ended the series with a triple failure. The first match saw a promising cameo cut short by a half-hearted miscue and a harmless brand of left-arm spin being easily negotiated. The second game witnessed Yuvraj the Edgy, often swinging at random as if batting blindfolded, and the third saw him begin his innings in a similar jumpy tone. He was dropped once, edged between the wicketkeeper and first

slip once, and often appeared to be a batsman completely out of place.

Yet, the fact that he ended as the tournament's third highest scorer says much about his tenacity. The turnaround was in the second game. First his bowling, snaffling a vital 3 for 36 in his nine overs, before scratching his way to an unbeaten 49 to guide India in a tense chase. It wasn't an assured effort but Yuvraj made sure he stayed till the match was won and the series levelled.

It was the sort of game that rusty players desperately hope for. Handed the ball in the 33rd over, he struck with his third delivery, removing JP Duminy with a mouth-watering longhop that was short and wide outside off. South Africa were then forced to consolidate and Yuvraj exploited the opening to a T, hurrying through his overs with good economy. In his fifth over he tossed up the straighter one, saw it keep low,

watched MS Dhoni take a smart catch, and got rid of Morne van Wyk, the set batsman. In his last over he removed the dangerous Andrew Hall with a flat, speedy, shot of a length delivery on the stumps. Hall missed the cut, Yuvraj hit the stumps.

With the bat in hand he regularly fished aimlessly outside off. Andre Nel kept throwing up the bait, Yuvraj kept failing for it but, and it's an important but, he kept missing. When he did make contact, as with an inside edge from Hall, the ball sped away to the fence. Mark Boucher must have needed throat lozenges at the end of the game with his exclamations after almost every ball but Yuvraj was still there after a grim battle, celebrating India's hard-fought win.

Former England spinner Robert Croft is one of several players who have complained of excessive verbal abuse from supporters.

And Peter Willey, chairman of England's first-class umpires' association, warned Tuesday that extra-security was needed at certain grounds.

An ECB spokesman told the BBC on Tuesday: "We have been looking at the problems and are determined to stamp it out."

Former England batsman Willey told the Times on Tuesday that he was especially concerned at the lack of security at out-grounds, where counties have used Twenty20 as a way of developing interest in cricket away from their headquarters venues.

"There might be some clubs who will be reluctant to employ security guards, but how expensive is a life? Those clubs would not want to be sued," Willey said.

"This has happened because the weather has been so bad. In past years the sun has shone, but this season spectators have sat around drinking pints."

Dickie Bird, the former Test umpire, said: "Robert Croft has hit the nail on the head, you've got to get more security and policing at grounds."

"This will cost a lot of money but it's the only answer as the safety of players and umpires is all-important," he also told BBC Radio Wales.

Glamorgan's Croft said he was subjected to "over the top" verbal abuse at Somerset on Friday, while there were incidents of theft and stones being thrown during Middlesex's match against Hampshire at Southgate.

ECB extends Donald deal

AFP, London

Allan Donald has had his role as England's bowling advisor extended until the end of the inaugural World Twenty20 in his native South Africa in September, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) announced Tuesday.

Former South Africa fast bowler Donald had been due to finish his initial five-week tenure with England at the end of the current one-day international series against the West Indies.

But he will now remain working with Kevin Shine, the ECB's fast bowling coach, for England's forthcoming Test and one-day series at home to India as well as the World Twenty20, under the overall direction of England head coach Peter Moores.

The 40-year-old Donald, whose initial appointment was well received by the likes of England fast bowler Stephen Harmison, said: "I've greatly enjoyed my time working with the England fast bowlers and am delighted to be staying on in the role until September.

"We have an exciting crop of bowlers in the England ranks and I'm looking forward to continue working with them for the remainder of the summer and the first tour of the winter," added Donald.

Both Kevin Shine and Peter Moores have provided excellent guidance in working with the ECB fast bowling programme and I'm grateful for the opportunity to continue my association in a consultancy capacity."

England, since Donald's involvement, have, against the West Indies, won a Test series 3-0, drawn a Twenty20 campaign 1-1 and lead a three-match one-day series 1-0 ahead of Wednesday's second match at Edgbaston.

Donald retired from Test cricket in 2002 with an impressive record of 330 wickets in 72 matches at an average of under 23 apiece.

ECB aware of violence

AFP, London

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has said it is determined to stamp out unruly behaviour from supporters following several incidents at domestic Twenty20 matches this season.

While Twenty20 has been successful in attracting new audiences to the sport in England there are also concerns that some of the crowds contain within them a loutish element more commonly associated with football fans than traditional cricket lovers.

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SLC change

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made at the top.

The present committee, headed by businessman Jayantha Dharmadasa, has been in office since March 2005 following a decision by Lokuge's predecessor to dismiss the democratically elected incumbent administration.

Lokuge said he preferred to hold elections for SLC office-bearers but is hampered from doing so due to a legal wrangle with pending lawsuits filed by rival factions.

Sri Lankan sports ministers have at different times since 1984 dissolved cricket administrations and entrusted interim committees to run the cash rich governing body.

WADA blasts ICC

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

tested positive for the banned steroid nandrolone in internal tests conducted by the PCB in October last year, and were banned for two years and one year respectively in November 2006.

However, a month later, both were controversially reinstated by a Pakistani appeals committee, prompting WADA to go to the CAS.

The CAS ruled that it did not have the jurisdiction to deal with the matter and that the PCB does not provide a right of appeal to the international sports court.

The court said however that it had reached the conclusion "with some considerable regret" -- a sentiment echoed by WADA.

"We regret the absence of jurisdiction of CAS in this specific case, but note with satisfaction that the CAS panel considered the exoneration of the two cricketers by the PCB Appeals Committee in this case," a WADA spokesman told AFP in an email.

New ball pair Akhtar and Asif

WADA however said the lifting of the ban was "inconsistent with a long and invariable line of CAS's decisions which hold that it is the athlete's duty to ensure that what he or she ingests does not contain a prohibited substance."

The organisation also called on the International Cricket Council to bring in anti-doping rules that allow all members and WADA to appeal against what might be termed as rogue decisions."

"We are now looking forward to the full implementation of the World Anti-Doping Code by the ICC (which adopted the code in July 2006) and its national associations at the earliest, and to pursuing its cooperation with the ICC in the fight against doping in sport," it said.

ICC chairman Naseem Ashraf on Monday said the court's decision vindicated both Pakistani cricket authorities and the two bowlers, and said the PCB still has a zero tolerance policy on doping.

Any such cases in future will be dealt under the WADA code, he added.

Maddy eyes T20 place

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

Warwickshire skipper Darren Maddy has set his sights on a place in England's Twenty20 World Cup squad.

Maddy has earned a reputation as one of the best exponents of the game and has not given up on a first appearance for England since 2000.

"It's a game I've done really well in the past few years," the 33-year-old batsman told BBC Sport.

"To play any form of international cricket should be every cricketer's goal and I'm not different."

Maddy's last game in England colours was a one-day international against Zimbabwe over seven years ago, when he scored a half-century but was not picked again.

He has played just eight one-day games and three Tests for his country but the introduction of Twenty20 has revitalised his international hopes.

Maddy was a key part of the Leicestershire side that won the Twenty20 Cup in 2004 and 2006 and he has taken up where he left

off after moving to Warwickshire this season.

Under his captaincy the Bears have already booked a place in the quarterfinals after five wins in six games (their other game was rained off).

And his form has led to suggestions he should be drafted into England's squad for the inaugural World Cup in South Africa in September.

Maddy added: "I'm not under any illusions just because I've played well in the past I should be an automatic choice, but certainly I feel if I can do well I'll be considered and thought about."

"I'm fully aware I need to win more games and get bigger scores and help Warwickshire have a good run in this competition to be considered."

England have lost four out of six of their international Twenty20 games and have so far resisted the calls to bring in specialists at the shorter form of the game.

Maddy has had no contact with any of the England coaching set-up about a potential call-up, but he remains optimistic of being in the selectors' thoughts.

He said: "Hopefully I can have a good Twenty20 series and get my name up there."

"I don't think their minds are on the Twenty20 World Cup and you can't really blame them -- they have a lot to work on."

"There is a lot of cricket to be played and a lot of good Twenty20 batsmen. It is about picking the batsmen who are best in form and do best at this form of the game."

"I understand why they stuck with the same side against the West Indies recently because of the one-day series starting immediately after -- they wanted to get their squad together."

"They picked the best team in their opinion and they feel the best players are the best to play in any form and there is a lot of truth in that."

"Unfortunately I think a lot of the England players have not played much Twenty20 so they have probably not grasped the concept of the game."

"Because of the heavy schedule for international players they miss out on a lot of the domestic competition which is a shame but I'm sure they'd be equally good at it."

"It is a different game.