

## 'Aussies will come hard'

PTI, Vadodara

Stung by the defeat to India at Chandigarh, Australian captain Ricky Ponting is not in a mood to concede more ground and cautioned the home team that they will treat the fifth cricket one-dayer tomorrow as a virtual final.

"The last game was a terrific game of cricket and India have made it 1-2 and the series is alive. Tomorrow is a very important game for us and we would treat it as a final. You know the Australian team is at its best in such games," Ponting said at the match-eve media conference on Wednesday.

But the Australian skipper was also aware of the heat and humidity factor which can trouble the visitors at the Reliance Stadium here.

"We have practiced extra hard on Wednesday. We made sure we have lots of intakes of fluids as it's very humid out there and the temperature is around 38 (degrees celsius)," he said.

Ponting felt that the way two big men -- Andrew Symonds and Mathew Hayden -- have imposed themselves on the bowlers with their size and power was an indication of how cricket will be played in future.

"Hayden and Symonds are imposing batsmen. Both are six-feet and go down the track to put pressure on the bowlers. With more of Twenty20 cricket coming up batsmen like me may be forced to restrict ourselves to Test cricket," he said with a smile.

## 'Change upsets'

CRICINFO, undated

The new one-day rule where the old ball is replaced for the 35th over is not making Brett Lee happy. Lee believes the change to a harder, shiny ball gives batsmen an advantage towards the end of an innings and says he is "not a massive fan" of the ICC regulation.

Previously balls were switched when they became soft and pitch-coloured, but in the current series in India one in significantly better condition has appeared. "The newer balls we've been using have been pretty shiny and still have the Kookaburra writing on them," Lee said in the Australian. "It makes it harder for the bowlers because you're trying to work with a ball that is as old as possible and you come on at the 34th over and you're left with a new ball again."

Tim Nielsen, Australia's coach, has noticed a change in scoring rates after the change. "After the 34th over our run rate's escalated quite a bit," he told the paper. "We've been going on at four or five an over and it's got up to seven or eight a couple of times. The different ball is harder and comes on to the bat better."

Lee has been tried with a soft ball during the series to see if he can get reverse-swing and he has also been employed with the replacement. "It depends on the position of the game," Nielsen said. "If you've got a new batsman you might bring on the fast bowlers. If you've got two batsmen in you might try and batten down the hatches a bit until the ball gets softer."

**Minister urges for Atapattu return**

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lankan Sports Minister Gamini Lokuge is keen to bring back former captain Marvan Atapattu into the squad for next month's tour of Australia, a ministry official said here Wednesday.

"The minister hopes to see Marvan in the next few days to hear his side of the story. He is keen to see an end to the present row between him and the selectors," spokesman Kapila Bamunuarachchi told AFP.

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) have already named their squad for the two Test matches in Australia, but the sports minister's approval is needed to make it official.

Atapattu was not immediately available for comment.

Lokuge on Tuesday met the selection panel, including chairman Asantha de Mel, to iron out the problems.

## England need

FROM PAGE 17

Mubarak b Sidebottom 20  
Vans c Pietersen b Sidebottom 2  
Fernando not out 3  
Malinga not out 3  
Extras: (b-3, w-11) 14  
Total: (For nine wkt in 50 overs) 211

Fall of wickets: 1-7, 2-16, 3-20, 4-146, 5-158, 6-166, 7-190, 8-195, 9-206.

Bowler O M R W  
Anderson 10 1 33 3  
Sidebottom 10 2 27 3  
Broad 10 0 54 2  
Collingwood 6 0 28 1  
Swann 10 0 48 0  
Bopara 4 0 18 0  
Umpires: Rudi Koertzen (RSA) and Tyron Wijewardene (SRI)  
TV umpire: Asoka de Silva (SRI)  
Match referee: Jagaval Srinath (IND)



PHOTO AFP

Russian Svetlana Kuznetsova celebrates after beating Gisela Dulko of Argentina at the Kremlin Cup tennis tournament in Moscow yesterday.

## Good start for Davydenko

### Tennis

AFP, Moscow

Russian Nikolay Davydenko, top seed and reigning champion of the 2.34 million-dollar joint ATP and WTA Kremlin Cup, began his title defence with a confident straight-set win over France's Jo-Wilfried Tsonga here on Tuesday. The world's number four won his first ever match with Tsonga 7-6 (7/0), 6-2, in one hour 27 minutes.

The 26-year-old broke in the seventh game but Tsonga broke back immediately to level forcing a tiebreak, which Davydenko won to move to 1-0 lead after 52 minutes.

In the second Davydenko took command, breaking early for a comfortable 3-0 lead, then again in the eighth game.

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"I was preparing myself for this style today but he wasn't playing this way making life much easier for me."

Davydenko next faces Nicolas Lapentti of Ecuador, who battled from a set down to beat France's Fabricio Santoro 3-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Another Frenchman Paul-Henri Mathieu, fourth seed here, booked his second round pass with an easy 6-2, 6-2 win over a compatriot Sebastien Grosjean in one hour six minutes, his first ever win over Grosjean in their three meetings.

"I tried to play solid tennis today after losing three times in a row in the first round and it was a success," Mathieu said.

"I watched plenty of Tsonga at the US Open and I admired the way he played aggressively, frequently advancing to the net," Davydenko said.

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