

Yousuf to face arbitration hearing

CRICINFO, undated

Mohammad Yousuf, the Pakistani batsman who recently pulled out of the Indian Cricket League (ICL), is set to face an arbitration hearing in Mumbai on December 15. Yousuf had signed with the ICL in the wake of his omission from Pakistan's squad for the ICC World Twenty20 before cancelling his contract after talks with the Pakistan board.

Yousuf then signed a national contract as well as signing up to play in the India Premier League (IPL), a recognised league that is run by four different national boards and is approved by the ICC.

The organisers of the ICL insist he can't join the rival league (IPL). "It's an open and shut case as far as we're concerned," said Ashish Kaul, the executive vice-president of the Essel Group who are organising the tournament, told Cricinfo. "The contract clearly says he can't play in any other professional league."

Meanwhile the Pakistan board, who convinced Yousuf to cancel his contract, have assured their full support. "We will fully defend Yousuf, if he is taken to court using all legal means," said Nasim Ashraf, the chairman of the PCB.

Besides Yousuf, all of the ICL's other Pakistani recruits have decided to honour their commitments with the league. The most prominent among them is the now retired Inzamamul Haq, who despite having signed on with the ICL, was given an opportunity to make his exit from international cricket in the second Test against South Africa. The others in the ICL, mix are Abdur Razzaq, Azhar Mahmood, Taufiq Umar, Imran Farhat, and Shabbir Ahmed.

Portuguese help for India

AFP, New Delhi

Football in India has been given a boost after the Portuguese Football League (LPA) signed a deal with Indian football bosses on Friday to help develop the country's youngsters.

The move will also see a Portuguese club visit the country further down the line, LPA vice-president Ricardo Castanheira said.

"Both the countries share political and historical relations and we want to take it forward. We will make all kinds of efforts to develop skills in youngsters," he told reporters.

"A Portuguese club coming to India will be in the second part," said Castanheira, who is part of a Portuguese delegation in Delhi for the European-India summit.

Castanheira, who signed the deal with All India Football Federation (AIFF) secretary Alberto Colaco, said the football culture of Portugal could inspire India.

"The running of academies is a very good practice in Portugal. Somebody like (Manchester United forward) Cristiano Ronaldo has come up because of that," he added. "They provide very good facilities for training and practice; this can serve as a benchmark for India."

Cricket-mad India is ranked 145th in international football, with none of its players enjoying iconic status.

National captain Bhaichung Bhutia is slightly popular, having played in the past for Bury Football Club in England's League Two.

The AIFF has a similar tie-up to promote soccer with Deutsche Futball Liga, which runs the Bundesliga in Germany.

Chelsea chief executive Peter Kenyon also promised to help develop Indian football on a visit to the country this month as part of an Olympic delegation.

Second win

FROM PAGE 17

reached 19 for two in 3.4 overs.

BRIEF SCORES

KHULNA: 253 and 327-5 in 76.1 overs (Inzamul 48, Sadat 6, Mustafizur 42, Shakib 103*, Tushar 92, Mashrafe 3, Nahid 13*; Mahabubul 1-42, Asrafur 1-64, Mosharraf 1-97, Riyad 2-32).

DHAKA: 204 and 275-4 in 78 overs (Anwar 40, Mehrab 75, Asrafur 75, Mahmudullah 27, Shamsur 51*, Nafid 4*, Shakib 1-53, Murad 1-85). BARISAL: 293 and 192 in 83.5 overs (Hannan 0, Shahriar 9, Imran 0, Rokibul 43, Raisul 21, Humayun 26, Shaheen 0, Arifat 31, Sajid 37, Tareq 3-58, Kamru 3-39, Dhaman 2-7).

CHITTAGONG: 352-9 dec and 137-3 in 28 overs (Salahuddin 60, Nafees 25, Nazimuddin 4, Dhiman 33*, Aftab 2*, Arifat 2-42).

RAJSHAHI: 417 and 228 all out in 93 overs (Saglan 8, Zunaed 12, Farhad 13, Naeem 50, Mushtaq 6, Jafurul 0, Mashud 30, Anisur 47, Farhad 36, Shahjada 5, Alamgir 0; Kapali 5-77, Enamul 3-57, Sadiqur 2-21).

SYLHET: 293 all out and 19-2 in 3.4 overs (Nazmul 8, Sadiqur 2*, Rashid 8; Farhad 2-5).



PHOTO: INTERNET
The six teams of Indian Cricket League (ICL) line up during an official photo session in Panchkula on Friday.

No hiding from hype

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Until Friday, Muttiah Muralidaran was a peripheral presence on England's tour of Sri Lanka. He popped up briefly at the Nonedescripts ground on Sunday to grab a sneak preview of his opponents, but by and large he's been keeping a low profile, recovering from a tough tour to Australia and leaving others to speculate about the unique challenge that he poses. But there's no hiding from the hype any longer.

Murali back in his home town of Kandy, and on Saturday, when the first Test gets underway at the Asgiriya Stadium, he faces the tantalising prospect of reclaiming his world Test bowling crown in front of his most ardent adorers. Back in January, his great rival, Shane Warne, retired from the game with a benchmark tally of 708 wickets, but now Murali needs just five more scalps to reclaim the record that he took from Courtney Walsh (519) at Harare in May 2004.

"It would be a special moment to do it in my home place because I grew up and played my cricket here in my younger days," said Murali, as he faced a scrum of media ahead of Sri Lanka's training session. "But it all depends on how I bowl and how they bat." On past form few would bet against him, but Murali was a shadow of his former self in Australia recently, where he managed a mere four wickets at 100 apiece in the entire two-Test series.

"He's one of the great batsmen but one mistake and you can get out," said Murali. "That's one of the things about Test cricket, you can't just reverse-sweep every time. But if he wants to, he's taken his risk."

Eight months on, Pietersen is perhaps a shade more deferential in his assessment of Murali's talents, but as ever remains geared towards aggression. "I will play pretty similar to the way I played him in the UK, I will just have to be a lot more patient," said Pietersen. "These are his conditions and it is definitely going to spin a lot more. I have thought about how to counter it and if it works it works, if it doesn't it doesn't work."

Pietersen is well placed to pass judgment on the current world-record holder and his soon-to-be successor, having crossed swords with Warne during his farewell series in Australia last winter. "They are both assassins. Both champions. Both geniuses," said Pietersen. "It is just a pleasure to face them and hopefully try to get the better of them."

"I know the way Shane tries to get you out and the way Muralidaran tries to get you out. The difference is

Muralidaran spins the ball both ways and is harder to pick. If you look at Muralidaran's delivery stride, his feet don't change whereas other bowlers do. The only change is his wrist and it is hard to pick that up."

"I am going out there as confident in my preparation as I can be, as I always am," said Pietersen.

"The more you face Muralidaran the more you start to pick him. Last year I only picked him 70-80% of the time, but the more you play him the easier it becomes, as with any bowler. It is just a case of trying to spend some time in the middle and get through your first 20 balls."

However, it'll take more than just 20 balls of resistance to deny Murali his most coveted milestone. At the age of 35, there cannot be many years left in a career that's most incredible players, but for the moment the enjoyment of the game remains strong, and he's determined to push on for as long as possible -- maybe even as far as 1000 wickets.

"It depends on my body and if my performance is as good as in the past," said Murali. "You can't just target wickets because you have to bowl well, and wait for batsmen to make mistakes. To get to 1000 I'd have to play for another four or five years, so realistically it's not possible, but if something goes well, like when I got 96 wickets last year, it could happen. You never know."

Such achievements never even crossed Murali's mind when he started playing the game as a schoolboy in Kandy. "I made it to a school team, then kept on going up to the national team, where I thought if I played one Test I'd be happy. But I wanted to keep on going a little more, and I kept on playing and the wickets came. I love the game so much I keep on playing. It's the No. 1 game in Sri Lanka, and until they find someone good I'll just keep on being that person."

Pollock leads recovery

FROM PAGE 17

Then he edged a four and slogged a six off the last two balls of the innings from Mark Gillespie to finish with 30 not out off 13 balls.

Mills, who took five for 25 in Durban, followed up with three for 43, while fellow new ball bowler Gillespie took three for 55.

Mills started the top-order collapse by dismissing both opening batsmen, Herschelle Gibbs and captain Graeme Smith without scoring after Smith won the toss and decided to bat.

Both were caught in the slips on a slow pitch which had some early seam movement.

New Zealand produced their best bowling and fielding performance of a dismally tour before Pollock and Boucher rebuilt the innings, starting their stand

slowly but increasing the scoring rate after they played themselves in.

But the Black Caps conceded 50 runs off the last five overs as South Africa gave themselves a chance of clinching the three-match series on a ground where batting second under floodlights has often proved difficult.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the second one-day international between South Africa and New Zealand at St George's Park in Port Elizabeth on Friday:

SOUTHAFRICA

Smith c Taylor b Mills 0

Gibbs c Styris b Mills 0

Kallis c Taylor b Oram 26

De Villiers c Gillespie 8

Duminy c Vincent b Patel 23

Boucher c Patel b Vettori 48

Pollock b Gillespie 52

Morkel b Gillespie 6

Botha c Vincent b Mills 8

Nel not out 30

Langeveldt not out 2

Extras: (tw-5, nb-1) 6

Total: (For 9 wkt in 50 overs) 209

Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-5, 3-20, 4-53, 5-66, 6-155, 7-167, 8-176, 9-194.

Bowler O M R W

Mills 8 1 43 3

Gillespie 10 1 55 3

Oram 10 1 31 1

Patel 10 0 39 1

Vettori 10 1 29 1

Styris 2 0 12 0

NEW ZEALAND: Vincent, McCullum, How, Styris, Taylor, Sinclair, Oram, Vettori, Mills, Patel, Gillespie.

Toss: South Africa.

Umpires: MR Benson (England) and M Erasmus

INDIA: First innings

Jaffer not out 192

Karthik c Younis b Tanvir 1

David c Akmal b Kania 50

Tendulkar b Kania 82

Ganguly not out 17

Extras: (b-4, lb-3, nb-3) 10

Total: (For three wkt in 84.3 overs) 352

To bat: Laxman, Dhoni, Kumble, Harbhajan, Zaheer, Patel.

Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-138, 3-313.

Bowler O M R W

Akhtar 9 1 29 0

Tanvir 24 3 118 1

Sami 18.3 1 56 0

Kaneria 30 3 126 2

Hameed 3 0 16 0

PAKISTAN: Butt, Hameed, Younis, Saeed, Iqbal, Misbahul, Akmal, Akhtar, Sami, Tanvir, Kania.

Toss: India.

Umpires: Billy Doctrove (WIS) and Rudi Koertzen (RSA)

TV umpire: Amish Sahiba (IND)

Match referee: Ranjan Madugalle (SRI)

Lions win opener

BBC ONLINE, undated

Chandigarh Lions, lead by former New Zealand star Chris Cairns, emerged victorious in the first match of the Indian Cricket League at Panchkula yesterday.

With South African Andrew Hall hitting 31 not out and Kiwi Daryl Tuffey taking 3-15 they beat Delhi Jets, led by Sri Lanka's Marvan Atapattu, by nine runs.

A glitzy ceremony marked the launch in the northern town of Panchkula, with a \$3.85m

pitching of the wickets to the field at the Asgiriya stadium.

"It's been a difficult decision," Vaughan said of the likely team after along training session on Friday.

Former West Indies captain Lara is leading Mumbai Champs, while Inzamam is the captain of Hyderabad Heroes, with the two sides meeting on Saturday.

The other teams have been named Kolkata Tigers and Chennai Superstars, although all games take place at the same venue, near Chandigarh.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has refused to acknowledge the ICL and has threatened players with lengthy bans.

An officially sanctioned rival, the Indian Premier League, begins play in April with star names including Australia's Ricky Ponting and Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan of Sri Lanka.

A new rule has been introduced in the ICL that prevents batsmen running for overthrows if a fielder's throw hits the stumps.

Leading Australian players want the annual home triangular cricket one-day series dumped from their schedule, reports said.

Senior stars Matthew Hayden and Adam Gilchrist say their Australian teammates are tired of the 30-year-old format.

The three-way series each Australian summer, the brainchild of late media mogul Kerry Packer, includes at least four non-core contests between the visiting sides and possibly seven if Australia does not make the final along with the number six spot.

"I give myself one more year in Test cricket and in that time I hope to take 350 wickets before I quit," Vaas told reporters on Friday.

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