

## Rebel world series starts

BBC ONLINE, undated

A rebel Twenty20 cricket league involving India, Pakistan and a Rest of the World XI was due to get underway in Hyderabad on Wednesday.

They will play each other twice in the Indian Cricket League World Series before the final on April 15 between the top two teams.

Stars including Brian Lara, Lance Klusener and Inzamam-ul-Haq will play.

But the league has not been recognised by the International Cricket Council.

And the Indian cricket board has also refused to sanction the league and has banned Indian players involved in it from taking part in official first-class games.

All of the players taking part in it can no longer play for their international sides.

The rebel league, led by former India captain Kapil Dev, was set up in November 2007 with six city teams taking on each other in the inaugural tournament.

The World Series version is an additional competition.

New Zealander Chris Cairns, captain of the rest of the world side, told the BBC the league was threatening to take legal action if it was not given official status.

"The travesty of the whole thing is that the spectators are being denied the opportunity to see the best players play globally," he said.

The Indian board's own Twenty20 Indian Premier League -- involving top stars from around the world -- is set to start on April 18.

## Lee to cash in on IPL stint

PTI, Melbourne

Australian speedster Brett Lee will use his Indian Premier League (IPL) stint for Kings XI Punjab to assess conditions at the PCA Stadium in Mohali, where Ricky Ponting's team will play a Test match during their tour of India later this year.

"I'll be playing three games at the Mohali stadium and I'll be doing as much as I can for the Punjab side," Lee said.

"But while I'm doing that, I'll be casting a keen eye on the way the wicket plays and the different angles to bowl for when we get the chance to go there and play against India. So it's a win-win case for everyone," he was quoted in The Age yesterday.

Australia will take on the Indians in the four-match series for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy with the second Test in Mohali from October 17-21.

Lee will play in the IPL for only a fortnight before he leaves for the tour of West Indies early next month and will open the bowling for his franchise side.

## Hilditch says they play it for love

AFP, Sydney

Australian cricketers play for love, not money, the country's chief selector said Wednesday after a survey found many top players would consider quitting to play in the new Indian Twenty20 leagues.

The survey, commissioned by the Australian Cricketers' Association, revealed that 47 per cent of the country's elite Cricket Australia players would contemplate early retirement to earn more money in the Indian fixtures.

Forty-nine per cent of cricketers who played at state level would consider ditching their Australian teams to play in the Indian Premier League (IPL) or its rival, the Indian Cricket League (ICL), said The Age newspaper, which published the survey results.

But national chairman of selectors, Andrew Hilditch, said the results did not match up with players' love for their country.

"I'd be very surprised if someone who is knocking on the door of Australian selection would take that stance," he said.

"There is a lot of money in the game both for Australian contracted players, and obviously there is a lot of money around the world at the moment, but the reality is I don't think many of them play for the money -- they still play to play for the country."

Hilditch said most of the players going to the IPL Twenty20 competition this month -- including Australian skipper Ricky Ponting, Test opener Matthew Hayden, paceman Brett Lee and all-rounder Andrew Symonds -- were going to enjoy themselves and improve their game.

## Tibet & Olympic

FROM PAGE 17 (1972). Black September had happened. But that didn't stop anything. So that's the whole point, these (Tibet and Olympics) are two different issues," he added.

Meanwhile, the Japanese team when asked about the issue, chose to keep mum.

"The Chinese are nice people but on this (torch relay disruptions) sorry, no comments," said their skipper Eiji Takeuchi.

## Kallis on top of 'em all

Cricket

AFP, London

South Africa all-rounder Jacques Kallis was on Wednesday named as the 'Leading Cricketer in the World for 2007' by the 2008 edition of Wisden Cricketers' Almanack, cricket's major annual reference work.

He became the fifth recipient of the award, introduced in 2004, after Australia's Ricky Ponting and Shane Warne, Andrew Flintoff of England and, last year, Muttiah Muralidaran of Sri Lanka.

The talented batsman and pace bowler won the award for his 1,210 Test runs at a staggering average of 86.42 and 20 wickets at an economical average of 25.75 apiece.

In a separate award, West Indies batsman Shivnarine Chanderpaul and India quick Zaheer Khan were named as two of Wisden's 'Five Cricketers of the Year'.

The award, which dates back to 1889, is one of the oldest in the sport and can only be won once by a player during the course of his career.

England duo Ian Bell and Ryan Sidebottom were also among the 'Five' as was former West Indies seamer Otis Gibson, honoured for his performances with English county Durham.

In a return to tradition, all five

men were chosen for the influence they'd had on the preceding English season.

Left-handed batsman Chanderpaul, 33, has often been all that has stood between the West Indies and the total collapse of



JACQUES KALLIS

their innings. Despite playing much of his career in a week side, has a high Test average of just under 48.

In 2007 he scored 446 runs in three Tests against England in a series where, as former West Indies fast bowler Ian Bishop wrote, "that no other West Indian managed a score of more than 60 in the Tests speaks of the yawning gap between his skill, commitment and experience -- and theirs."

Zaheer, who honed his talents playing county cricket for Worcestershire, was selected after taking 18 wickets in three Tests during India's 1-0 series win over England including nine during their decisive victory at Trent Bridge.

Sidebottom, another left-arm pace bowler, took his first Test wickets in 2007, six years after making his England debut, and added a re-assuring element of reliability to what had been a wayward attack.

Meanwhile Bell, one of England's most gifted batsmen, was included after a year where he at last looked comfortable at international level.

"The Five Cricketers of the Year" is not an award exclusive to international players and has often included someone who has had a major impact on the English county game.

Hence the inclusion of the Barbados-born Gibson, the last of whose two Tests for the West Indies was back in 1999.

In his final season the pace bowler, now the England team's bowling coach, took 80 wickets for Durham.

And in July, at the age of 38, he took 10 for 47 as Hampshire were dismissed for 115 with Gibson becoming the 79th player to take all 10 wickets in a first-class innings.

## Jones on comeback trail

Cricket

REUTERS, Worcester

Fast bowler Simon Jones is fit and ready to win back his England place after enduring almost three injury-hit years since he last played a Test during the 2005 Ashes-winning series.

Jones, 29, was a key man in that 2005 triumph over Australia with 18 wickets, before a succession of injuries left his career in tatters.

Having left Glamorgan and his native Wales, Jones begins his latest comeback with new county Worcestershire next week.

From the time he missed the fifth Ashes Test in September 2005 with an ankle problem through to multiple setbacks with his knee -- Jones despaired at how his career was disintegrating.

"It's been very hard, going from such a high to such a low in such a short space of time and having to take a long time to get back to where I want to be," Jones told Reuters on Tuesday.

"I found it tough to start with and thought 'what am I doing

wrong?' I couldn't understand why I kept picking up injuries. Fair enough if I was a lazy sod and didn't do the right things."

"It was one thing after another. Freddie (Andrew Flintoff) has had the same problem with his ankle. It is just a frustrating time because you don't get into any rhythm and you miss the game a hell of a lot."

"I sometimes watched the (Ashes) footage if I was feeling low. I only need to watch a bit and it gets me going again because there is no bigger spectacle than the Ashes. That's one of my motivations, to do well, keep fit and push for a place if not this season, next season when the Ashes come round again."

Jones has enjoyed a successful England career, having taken 59 wickets at 28 in 18 Tests. Even before his most recent injury nightmare he had battled back from a separate knee ligament injury from the 2002 Brisbane Test.

He believes his timeout of the game will at least have helped preserve him when so many international cricketers seem to be on a constant treadmill, further has-

tened by the global Twenty20 extravaganza.

"It's a blessing in disguise, looking at it as a positive," said Jones. "Look at Brett Lee, he's 32 and is bowling the best he has ever bowled and he has had some serious setbacks with his ankle and with his back and he is still bowling quickly."

Jones is just excited at the prospect of playing cricket again and has remodelled his approach to fast bowling -- he plans on running in to the crease faster to build momentum in his action rather than his old amble in and explode style.

Jones was given a few tips from boyhood hero Allan Donald, the former South Africa fast bowler, during a practice game against Warwickshire this week. He's now a man with a mission to put his new fitness and technique into practice.

"This season is going to be vital for me," he added. "Although I don't want too much pressure on myself I know that I can get back to where I want to be with England, and working well with Worcester."

## When bits fell

FROM PAGE 17

Rasel, a niggardly little left-arm swinger who gives away, on average, four runs an over, also sat out, leaving Pakistan to plunder Aftab Ahmed, Ashraf and Mahmudullah.

Ashraf acknowledged nervously that the strategy was a mistake, though the thinking behind it seems embedded. "Everyone looks for two skills in a player these days, like Forhad Reza, who does both. But yes we missed one seam bowler today. Mortaza and Reza bowled well for us in the first 20 overs but after that we missed a bowler."

Jamie Siddons, the coach, explained later that they wanted to beef up the batting and could've done with a fast bowler who bats. They could also have done with another fast bowler. "We tried it against Ireland, but it backfired here," Siddons said, admitting that the policy would be revisited before the next match in Faisalabad.

The irony of ironies, of course, was that in sacrificing bowling options to strengthen the batting there promptly followed a properly abysmal batting performance. Sohail Tanvir and Rao Iftikhar, who shared five wickets between them, will know in their hearts that they could bowl till they are 95, but easier wickets will not come their way again. "Our batsmen didn't play well today. We didn't stick to our team rules and got out to rash shots," said Ashraf. "It is difficult chasing over 300 but we just didn't bat well on a good batting wicket."

Still, Bangladesh will console themselves with the belief that they cannot be this poor again. A match such as this is best gotten out of the system early in a series rather than towards the end. And while they are at it, they might also consider ridding their system of the reliance on the multi-dimensional player.

(Osman Samiuddin is Pakistan editor of Cricinfo)

## Sultan 51% happy

FROM PAGE 17

Although the BFF introduced the professional football league, it had to compromise with tournaments like the National Championship, which has been held only twice in five years, and the almost extinct Federation Cup. The very popular National League has also been ignored for the past three seasons.

"There are many reasons behind this. The main problem is financial. Also many times, the clubs have disagreed to play because of the same problem."

"The future committee must have a financial plan as well as the assistance of the government. We failed to organise any international tournament in five years because of my own government's obstructions," commented Sultan adding that the BFF received Tk4.5 crore as sponsorship money for tournaments during his tenure. Also, the FIFA provides 2.5 lakh dollars yearly and the AFC 5,600 dollars per month.

"Without a self-generating finance system, the federation will not succeed."

"It's true there had been no long-

term planning and we have been depending on natural talents only. But the federation was much disciplined than the past and we managed to create a democratic environment."

Acknowledging the suspension of the BFF by FIFA, soon after the BNP government named his president, as the darkest chapter in history of Bangladesh football, Sultan said it was better forgotten soonest.

In reply to a question, he said it was at his initiative the AFC President's Cup Group A matches, involving local giants Abahani, were offered to Dhaka but his colleagues were against him in organising the five-day meet this month due to election campaign.

"We have won one SAFF Championship and finished runners-up in the other in five years although our national team performance and the SA Games record is down going. There is no alternative to improve the performance but playing football throughout the year. We have failed to ensure that."

"With all these accounts, I claim

## Kalabagan

FROM PAGE 17

but his efforts fell short as Young Pegasus rode on Iftikhar Nayeem's controlled 49 off 103 balls. He was unbeaten and it was fitting that skipper Jubair remained at the crease when the winning runs were scored.

But the other dressing room at the home of cricket was full of sorrow as it meant Kalabagan's latest stint in the Premier League ended with two consecutive defeats.

Now all eyes are on the last playoff match between Sonargaon and Young Pegasus, winner of which will remain in the lucrative competition come next season.

### BRIEF SCORES

KALABAGAN: 128 all out in 42.1 overs (Chandra 36\*, Arif 21; Jubair 5-27, Mamun 2-33).

YOUNG PEGASUS: 130-6 in 44 overs (Hasan 3-24, Golam 2-25).

Result: Young Pegasus won by four wickets.

to be a better president than the past ones. In the past, presidents were just ornaments who approved decision in meetings. I feel I have changed that. But as a federation chief, I feel I am just 51 per cent satisfied."

## Liverpool win

FROM PAGE 17

right which flew off Liverpool goalkeeper Pepe Reina's thigh and into the net.

Liverpool equalised after 30 minutes when Arsenal left Hyppia unmarked at a Gerrard corner and the tall Finnish defender powered a header inside the far post.

Torres, who had had a relatively quiet match, produced a moment of brilliance after 69 minutes, turning and shooting high into Manuel Almunia's net to put Liverpool 2-1 ahead. It was his 29th goal in only his 40th match for the club.

The game swung back Arsenal's way when Adebayor scored before Liverpool's stupendous comeback in the closing minutes.

## India announce Australia dates

AFP, New Delhi

India will host four Tests against Australia later this year, the Board of Control for Cricket in India said on Wednesday while announcing the dates and venues.

The Australians will arrive on September 29 and play a four-day practice match ahead of the first Test in Bangalore from October 9.

The remaining Tests will be played in Mohali, New Delhi and Nagpur, according to the schedule released by the Board of Control for Cricket in India.

### SCHEDULE

Oct 25	4-dayer	TBA
Oct 9-13	1st Test	Bangalore
Oct 17-21	2nd Test	Mohali
Oct 28-Nov 1	3rd Test	New Delhi
Nov 5-9	4th Test	Nagpur

## Sanath wants to impress in IPL

PTI, Mumbai

Former Sri Lankan Sanath Jayasuriya, currently out of the Sri Lankan limited-overs side, is eager to make a mark for Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League (IPL) starting April 18 and stake a claim for a berth in the national team.

"I am looking forward to playing in the tournament and helping Mumbai Indians win the title. It would be a great thing in my career to open with Sachin (Tendulkar), the best player in the world. I am really happy to open with him," said Jayasuriya over a teleconference from Sri Lanka.

"I met up with him in Hobart during the one-day series in Australia and discussed the IPL. I always love to play for my country, but this is different with all teams having a mixture of players from various countries. I would give my best for Mumbai," said the former Sri Lanka captain.

Describing the Mumbai squad as a strong one, he pointed out that apart from himself and Tendulkar, the team had retired South African all-rounder Shaun Pollock, Dilhara Fernando and young Indian batsman Robin Uthappa.

"We have quite a few good players in Pollock, Uthappa, Loo Bosman (of South Africa). It's going to be exciting as we would be playing against other Sri Lankan players like Kumar (Sangakkara), Mahela (Jayawardene), (Lasith) Malinga and (Muttiah) Murali (daran)," Jayasuriya said.

Jayasuriya, dropped from the Sri Lanka one-day team playing in the West Indies, maintained that he was fit and working hard for the IPL.

"I am young too. I am very fit and working hard. I want to perform with bat and ball," said the 38-year-old marauder from Matara in Sri Lanka.

## Australia rebuilds

AFP, Sydney

Cricket Australia opened the door for a new generation of cricketers Wednesday when it named the 25 players awarded contracts for the 2008-09 season.

With the retirement of Adam Gilchrist, Brad Hogg and Jason Gillespie, selectors opted for four new faces in the pool of players who will form the core of Australia's Test, one-day and Twenty20 sides for the upcoming season.

Batsman David Hussey, the brother of current Test star Michael, was among those handed a contract for the first time, as was Shaun Marsh, the son of former Test opener Geoff.

New South Wales state paceman Doug Bollinger's performances in the domestic competition also earned him a debut contract, along with teammate Beau Casson.

Batsman Simon Katich and Queensland bowler Ashley Noffke were reinstated to the elite group after being dropped last season.

Selectors also kept faith with troubled fast bowler Shaun Tait, who surprised the cricketing world in January when he announced he would take an indefinite break from the game, citing "physical and emotional turmoil."

But opening bat Chris Rogers was a shock exclusion, paying the price for his failure to fill in for Matthew Hayden in the third Test loss to India last January, where he managed just 19 runs in two innings.

South Australian state spinners Cullen Bailey and Daniel Cullen were also dropped as selectors continue the search for a young tweaker to fill the void left by Shane Warne.

Selectors' chairman Andrew Hilditch said the contract list contained a balance experienced players and emerging talent.

### CONTRACTED PLAYER

Doug Bollinger, Nathan Bracken, Beau Casson, Stuart Clark, Michael Clarke, Brad Haddin, Matthew Hayden, Ben Hilfenhaus, Brad Hodge, James Hopes, David Hussey, Mike Hussey, Phil Jaques, Mitchell Johnson, Simon Katich, Brett Lee, Stuart MacGill, Shaun Marsh, Ashley Noffke, Ricky Ponting, Andrew Symonds, Shaun Tait, Adam Voges, Shane Watson, Cameron White.

## SA eye Asian treble

Cricket

AFP, Kanpur

A buoyant South Africa will be keen to capitalise on India's form and fitness worries ahead of Friday's third and final Test here to complete a hat-trick in the sub-continent.

The visitors lead 1-0 in the series following their crushing win by an innings and 90 runs in the second Test in Ahmedabad last Saturday after the opening match ended in a draw in Chennai.

South Africa need only a draw to make it three-in-a-row in the sub-continent, having clinched Test series in Pakistan in 2007 and in Bangladesh this year.

Adaptability is the key to South Africa's success in recent months in South Asia, where home spinners usually make merry on low, slow pitches.

Graeme Smith's South Africans look better prepared than most of the visiting teams as they have not allowed the home spinners to dictate terms with their determined batting.

India's spin duo of Anil Kumble and Harbhajan Singh, proven

match-winners at home, looked below their best in the last two Tests while pacemen failed to match their South African counterparts.

South Africa thrived on a mediocre Indian attack, posting 540 and 331-5 in Chennai and 494-7 declared in Ahmedabad. AB de Villiers, Jacques Kallis, Neil McKenzie and Hasim Amla each had centuries to his credit.

The visitors have also proved they have a sharp bowling attack to back their solid batting, with Dale Steyn, Makhaya Ntini and Morne Morkel making life uncomfortable for the Indian batsmen with their pace and variations.

"As a captain this is the first time I feel I have a bowling attack that can be successful in the sub-continent," Smith said ahead of the final Test.

India were undone by quality pace on a lively track in Ahmedabad where they were shot out for 76 off 20 overs in the first innings, their second-lowest total at home.

They did better in the second innings when they made 328, with Sourav Ganguly and Mahendra Singh Dhoni scoring half-centuries. But it was not good enough to save the match which ended inside three days.

Injuries to key bowlers have also added to India's problems ahead of the must-win match, with Kumble (groin) and paceman Ishant Sharma (finger and toe) yet to recover completely. Both will face a fitness test on Thursday.

"The only snag in our plans is the injury worries," said Kumble. "We have a couple of problems to work around -- unfortunately, my own injury is a major concern really -- and that is giving us some stress."

India could name three spinners in their playing eleven as the pitch at the Green Park here is expected to help slow bowlers.

"The wicket here has always been slow, with a low bounce and from what I've been given to understand -- nothing much has changed," said Kumble.

"It's time for us to look ahead and recoup. We all know the responsibility we carry and realise that the only way to do this is to get a really big score and have the bowlers come up with a special performance."

Off-spinner Ramesh Powar was included in the 16-man squad as cover for Kumble. Seamer Munaf Patel came in place of Rudra Pratap Singh, who was axed after the second match.

## 'IPL ban won't work'

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

Cricket bosses are fighting a losing battle in trying to stop England's top stars from appearing in the Indian Premier League (IPL), says Graham Gooch.

Gooch said the decision to stop centrally contracted players from earning the riches on offer in India was not a long-term option.

"Accommodation will be made between our board and the players," the former England captain told BBC Sport.

"There's a lot of sabre rattling but it will all be sorted out in the end."

Gooch, England's all-time leading run scorer in Test cricket, said something would have to give as players would not be happy to turn down the riches on offer in the IPL, India's official Twenty20 league.

"I don't think people will want to be at loggerheads with each other," he said.

"Either players on central contracts will have to have their remuneration greatly enhanced or they will have to be accommodated within the contract."

The England and Wales Cricket Board has refused to let any of the 12 centrally contracted players sign up for the first season of the IPL.

Ryan Sidebottom, named on Wednesday as one of Wisden's five cricketers of the year, said he would love to play in the IPL -- if the ECB

relented.

The England bowler told BBC Radio 5 Live: "It's down to England and I'm contracted to them."

"The calendar is very hectic and to play for England you represent your country and I'm concentrating on that."

"If there is a window for the IPL then I would love to play in it, of course."

Hampshire all-rounder Dimitri Mascarenhas, who has played for England at one-day and Twenty20 level, is the only English player set to appear in the IPL.

The IPL developed rapidly in importance while Michael Vaughan's team were on tour in New Zealand in February and March, but the ECB said there was not enough time for the players to go to India between the end of their winter cricket and the home series against New Zealand in May.

Star batsman Kevin Petersen has called for England players to be allowed to feature in the tournament, with the league's top earners set to earn more than 500,000 pounds for six weeks' work.

The ECB has continued to distance itself from the IPL despite other national boards allowing some of the game's top names to represent Indian teams from April 18 to June 1.