



Players and officials of the Bangladesh under-15 cricket team pose for a photograph at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Younis has no plan to retire

PTI, Karachi

Younis Khan's pull-out midway from the ongoing ODI series against Bangladesh may have triggered speculation about his future but the senior Pakistani batsman yesterday said he has no intention of taking an early retirement.

The right-hander told PTI that he had not thought about retiring at this stage and was keen to play for a few more years.

Younis withdrew from the squad for the last three ODIs against Bangladesh, leading to speculation that he might retire as he was unhappy by the Pakistan Cricket Board's indifference to his questioning by International Cricket Council's Anti-Corruption and Security Unit (ACSU) last week.

The board said that Younis had withdrawn from the ongoing series as he had to attend to a personal problem, but manager Talat Ali and selectors said the senior batsman wanted rest.

Younis didn't elaborate on this issue but said he did want to rest for a few days.

"But this talk about me retiring is not correct. Neither has the cricket board spoken to me about any disciplinary action being taken against me for whatever reason," he said.

Meanwhile, sources said Younis was still upset over the manner in which the board had allowed the ACSU official to interview him without any prior notice before the first one-day international against Bangladesh in Lahore.

Rainy season opener in England

AFP, London

Rain, as much a part of cricket in England as Lord's itself, had the last word here Sunday in the opening match of the 2008 English season when a persistent downpour washed out the final day's play in the traditional curtain-raiser between MCC and the county champions, Sussex.

Not a ball was bowled Sunday on the fourth day at Lord's, the match ending in a draw.

The game was already heading towards a stalemate with Sussex 474 for five in their second innings overnight, a lead of 440, with Luke Wright a career-best 155 not out and Robin Martin-Jenkins unbeaten on 73.

Earlier, Sussex's South Australia pace bowler Ryan Harris took four for 36 as MCC were bowled out for 205 in an innings where England batsman Owais Shah top-scored with 72 and no-one else made more than 33.

Sussex begin the defence of their County Championship title away to south coast rivals Hampshire at the Rose Bowl on Wednesday.

BRIEF SCORES

SUSSEX: 171 (S Kirby 4-39, J Tredwell 3-19, G Onions 3-49) and 474-5 (L Wright 155 not out, C Nash 90, R Martin-Jenkins 73 not out, C Shreck 3-119).

MCC: 205 (O Shah 72; R Harris 4-36).

Result: Match abandoned as a draw.

Nat'l booters

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organisation. "We will play exhibition matches to collect money and it would be our main source of income but we will also try to collect money from other sources," said Joy adding that they will play their first match at Cox's Bazar on April 16 and the second match on the following day at Chokoria.

Besides Joy, striker Alfaz Ahmed and Arman Miah were the other notable faces among nearly 30 footballers present during the briefing.

Mendis makes his mark

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Ajantha Mendis's maiden one-day international performance has come in for praise from both the Sri Lankan and West Indian camps, with Dwayne Bravo expressing how difficult it was to pick the rookie spinner. Mendis bowled impressively to collect 3 for 39, flummoxing Chris Gayle and Darren Sammy with his crafty variations, as Sri Lanka narrowly failed to win the opening match of the three-game series.

"To be honest, when we saw his stats -- after 19 first-class matches, he had 111 wickets at an average of 14.54 -- we knew he had to be bowling something good," said Bravo, who won the man-of-the-match award. "Ramaresh" Sarwan had problems picking him, and from the time we saw this, most of the batsmen retreated to the dressing room, and had a close look at his hand on the TV monitor.

"I actually went and had a look at his hand on the computer, and it was still really difficult to pick him, but I found that once you are prepared to watch the ball closely, it is half the job done. He is a very good effort from Mendis and believed he could have a long career. 'I could tell you about his variations if I knew what they were and even all of our guys struggle to know what he is doing with the ball,' he said.

"The poise that he had in the first ODI -- not just what he was bowling -- to be able to keep a lid on things under pressure in one-day cricket is a very good sign. This has been the exceptional thing from my point of view. To be able to maintain his composure and do what he normally does was brilliant."

Bayliss said he was prepared to allow Mendis to experiment in the one-day format. "We just told him to go out there and do whatever he has done in the past. But it's how young players handle the pressure of international cricket that's critical, and he handled it very well."

"From my point of view, the higher up the ladder you go in this game, it's more of a mental thing. It's how you cope with pressure, and if something is working for him at one level, it's no reason why it cannot work at the next."

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