

Dubai drops
Asif case?

CRICINFO, undated

The case against Pakistan fast bowler Mohammad Asif, who was detained in Dubai on June 1 for suspected possession of an illegal substance, has been dropped by the Dubai Public Prosecution and the fast bowler will be deported soon, according to a report in the Gulf News.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), however, was yet to confirm or deny the development.

The report quoted the public prosecutor as saying the case was being dropped due to "insignificance".

"He [Asif] will be deported as soon as the police finalise the procedures," Mohammad Al Nuaimi, the public prosecutor who handled Asif's case, told Gulf News. "It is definite that he committed the crime as he was caught red-handed... however in certain cases and for a faster litigation process the Public Prosecution drops a case due to insignificance and deports the suspect."

It is likely that the PCB will take action against Asif should he return, but even if they don't, the International Cricket Council (ICC) might. They have been monitoring the situation and it is possible that Asif will face penalties under the World Anti Doping Agency (WADA), of which the ICC is a signatory, once he is released.

Pakistan axe

FROM PAGE 17

The 26-year-old Akmal has been unimpressive behind the stumps and dropped some crucial catches in Pakistan's tri-series matches in Dhaka earlier this month.

Pakistan, however, won the series beating India by 25 runs in the final.

Akmal has played 88 one-day internationals and 38 Tests since making his debut in 2003.

PROBABLES
Shoaib Malik (captain), Salman Butt, Nasir Jamshed, Younus Khan, Mohammad Yousuf, Shahid Afridi, Misbahul Haq, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Fawad Alam, Buzid Khan, Naumanullah Khan, Sohail Tanveer, Umar Gul, Wahab Riaz, Rameez Raza, Sohail Khan, Yasir Hameed, Mansoor Amjad, Abdur Rauf, Saeed Ajmal.

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Her name recognition is so powerful that an internet search brings up over seven million results. Not bad for a 21-year-old.

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won Wimbledon, you just wake up and you feel it," said Sharapova. "You go out your door and a van is following you. Was I ready for that? It teaches you. That's not something you learn."

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Despite her roots, she has endured thinly disguised barbs from some of her compatriots on tour who point to her American accent, and ignore her fluent Russian, as evidence of an alleged lack of patriotism.

Their suspicions were only made deeper by Sharapova's long-delayed Fed Cup debut, in which taking part is a pre-requisite of competing in the Beijing Olympics.

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"It was like if you won a Grand Slam at 17, all of a sudden everyone thought I should be winning a Grand Slam every single year."

"That was absurd. Now I deal with expectations fine. I don't care about them. I have confidence in my own self to know what I do well. I know my faults. I'm not scared of them."

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Brazil midfielder Diego (L) tries a bicycle kick during their World Cup 2010 qualifier against perennial rivals Argentina at the Mineirao Stadium in Belo Horizonte on Wednesday.

Surprised was Sharapova

AFP, London



When 17-year-old Maria Sharapova became the third youngest Wimbledon

women's champion in 2004, she famously tried -- and failed -- to call her mother from Centre Court.

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Abahani's flight
delayed twice

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani were stranded at the Zia International Airport yesterday for over seven hours to board a Bangladesh Biman flight to Kuala Lumpur, where the B. League champions will take part in the June 22-26 AFC President's Cup.

The 11.30am flight was rescheduled for 4.30pm but the team, having arrived at the ZIA at 2.30pm, were yet to board the aircraft till 9.30pm.

Manager Satyajit Das Rupu informed over phone that they were due to fly around 10pm.

Provided they didn't lose another wicket, they needed just seven runs off the 20th over -- the minimum required to constitute a match -- to win, albeit under dark skies and with rain falling, as it had done for several overs.

Australian umpire Steve Davis and his English on-field colleague Ian Gould then took the players off in a match already interrupted and delayed by rain.

England took a seemingly slow 83 minutes to bowl 19 overs but Vettori said it was the umpires, not Paul Collingwood's men, who were at fault.

"You just need the umpires to take control of the game and dictate the play," Vettori said after

Wednesday's 'no-result' which left New Zealand still 1-0 down in the five-match series.

"There was obviously a bit of gamesmanship going on. You can't attack anyone for that but you need constant monitoring of the over-rate."

International Cricket Council (ICC) match referee Jagavall Srinath insisted England had not done anything to warrant disciplinary action.

"England were not in breach of the over-rate," the former India fast bowler told reporters.

"They had enough allowances. There were a few referrals to the third umpire and injuries."

Vettori, whose side were beaten 2-0 in a three-Test campaign by England earlier this tour and lost Friday's lone Twenty20 by nine wickets before suffering a 114-run thrashing in last weekend's opening one-dayer, said this result felt like a defeat.

"I think this is a game we would have won had we been able to play the allotted overs or even get through that 20th over."

"There's a sense of disappointment in the dressing room, it's almost like a loss. It's been a tough tour."

In last year's World Cup final, eventual winners Australia and Sri Lanka were obliged to come back on in near total darkness in

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