

Pak greets hail sacking

Former Pakistan cricket greats Friday applauded the sacking of national coach Geoff Lawson and wasted no time in attacking the former Australian bowler.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) sacked Lawson on Friday, just 15 months after the former pacesetter took up the position.

Lawson's sacking was inevitable, former captain and master batsman Zaheer Abbas told AFP. "This comes as a popular decision because results were not there, we have had enough of the foreign coaches."

However, Abbas said Lawson was not totally to blame for Pakistan's poor results, saying the PCB had exercised bad judgement in hiring him.

The PCB appointed him coach so the blame must be shared between the two parties but I think after having three foreign coaches we must realise that they do not belong to our culture and do not give it all."

The 50-year-old Lawson was appointed Pakistan coach in July last year after Pakistan's first-round defeat in the World Cup in the Caribbean in March.

Calls for his removal intensified when Pakistan lost to Sri Lanka in the final of the T20 four-nation event in Canada earlier this month.

Another former captain, chief selector Amir Sohail, a persistent critic of Lawson, said the decision was the correct one given his lack of progress with the team. "I would term this as a popular decision," he said.

"I would not take into account results because they are part and parcel of the game. I would say it is a correct decision because the team was not showing any progress under him."

Sohail said he favoured former batting great Javed Miandad to take over. Intikhab Alam, also one of the favourites to replace Lawson, said a clean-up was needed of Pakistan cricket and the Australian had failed to deliver.

"We need a clean-up for positive change in Pakistan cricket and I found Lawson as abrasive and unyielding," said Alam, a former coach and manager, who also led Pakistan in the 1970s.

Arthur's contract extended till WC

Cricket South Africa has extended Mickey Arthur's contract as coach until the 2011 World Cup, and appointed Mike Procter as convener of selectors.

The new selection panel also features former South African vice-captain Craig Matthews, Winky Ximiyi and Mustapha Khan, who has been a selector for a number of years.

Bhaji blasts

FROM PAGE 17 on appeal. Gilchrist was annoyed that Tendulkar told the appeal Harbhajan had used a Hindi term that sounded like monkey, although he had earlier given evidence that he could not hear Harbhajan's comment.

"I don't want to talk about that episode again and again. It is over," Harbhajan said. "If you talk to any guy who plays or follows cricket about Sachin Tendulkar, they will talk about the respect he commands. These guys can't come close to him. I am really shocked."

Harbhajan said the ill-feeling between the two sides that spilled over in the series in Australia had long since passed. He said both teams had played in the right spirit in the first two Tests in India this month.

Lawson sends

FROM PAGE 17 agreement. But as Cricinfo reported on Friday, it is believed that the amount given to Lawson with his termination notice was "thousands and thousands of dollars" less than what it should have been. As a result the cheque was sent back to board officials by Lawson and the discrepancy in amounts pointed out.

"I believe something has come back from Lawson regarding the outstanding payment," Salim Altaf, director-general PCB, told Cricinfo. "There is no major problem and if there is a difference then it will be handled by our lawyers as per the contract and sorted out."

Fellini derails MU

FROM PAGE 17 a routine win during a memorable opening 45 minutes in which Ryan Giggs played a starring role.

With Fletcher providing admirable support alongside his captain, Everton quickly lost any foothold they may have had in the game and United were able to attack at will.

United's complete dominance, though, appeared to deprive them of their urgency in front of goal and instead of going for the kill after Fletcher's superbly taken 22nd minute opener, they were guilty of over-elaboration.

Predictably it was Dimitar Berbatov and Cristiano Ronaldo who showcased the most flicks and feints at the expense of delivering the quality final ball that would have brought more reward.

Most infuriating was Berbatov's nonchalant 32nd minute flick that sent the ball tamely in Tim Howard's arms when the clever approach play of Giggs and Rooney deserved a more convincing finish.

Two minutes earlier former United keeper Howard had denied Giggs the goal his display deserved while it took a superbly timed lunge from Phil Jagielka to nick the ball off Rooney's toe when the England forward seemed certain to score from just six yards out.

Did U Know?

John Newcombe and Tony Roche, both Australian, won most Grand Slam men's doubles titles, 12 - four Australian, two French, one US and five Wimbledon, between 1965 and 1976.



A sniffer dog was brought in by security officials at the Feroz Shah Kotla in Delhi yesterday to inspect the cricket pitch on which the third Test between India and Australia will be played from October 29. The hosts lead the 4-Test series 1-0.

IPL not to blame: Modi

Cricket

AFP, London

Indian Premier League chairman Lalit Modi said his organisation could not be held responsible if Sri Lanka cancelled their tour of England in April and May next year.

Sri Lanka, themselves a substitute side for Zimbabwe, could pull out of the scheduled two Tests and three one-day internationals, which precede the Ashes, because stars such as Kumar Sangakkara and Muttiah Muralidaran are contracted to the IPL.

Meanwhile, the Sri Lankan board, who are in no position to offer their players anything like the money they might earn in the Twenty20 jamboree, are concluding a 40-million-dollar deal with the IPL.

That would lead to the full participation of Sri Lankan players in the IPL and the Twenty20 Champions League for the next decade.

Modi, speaking at the Global Sport Summit in London, said: "The ICC's (International Cricket Council's) tours programme is fixed seven years in advance. Everybody commits to that and players commit to their countries

on that basis. "There are gaps in the scheduling. Based on those gaps players and countries make other programmes to fill them. The Indian Premier League took into account the ICC's fixed programme and signed players on three-year contracts.

"The Sri Lanka board gave their players a no-objection certificate for three years to play in the Indian Premier League.

"Unfortunately the Zimbabwe tour to England was cancelled. The ECB (England and Wales Cricket Board) had an obligation to Sky television to bring another team in.

"It is always portrayed that the Indian Premier League is stopping the Test matches being played. There was never a scheduled Test in the first place.

"The Sri Lankan tour would breach the contract with the Indian Premier League."

England is unusual among major cricket nations in that good crowds regularly attend Test matches. Many believe the growth of Twenty20 tournament such as the IPL poses a threat to what traditionalists still regard as the ultimate form of the game.

But Modi said there was room in the calendar for both brands of cricket. "Test cricket is here to stay. It has its own hard core following and we will continue to see that go forward," said Modi.

The England and Wales Cricket Board had said centrally contracted players could not play IPL cricket in 2009. But Modi said it might be possible for the likes of England captain Kevin Pietersen to get his hands on an IPL contract.

"We would love to have the English players play for the IPL. We have the top 100 players in the world in the IPL and they are the only players missing.

"The ECB has approached the BCCI and the IPL with the objective of saying they are ready to provide non-objection certificates to the English players to play in the IPL.

"But there is a big catch to it. The ECB are set to launch the English Premier League and the quick pro is that if the ECB was to release their players, then the IPL must release a minimum of 20 players for the English Premier League.

"It has to go to a governing council and the BCCI board for approval. In the absence of that approval we will continue the way we are.

"I hope the English players can participate but I cannot guarantee that."

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Unceremonious for him too

Cricket

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan Cricket Board's newly appointed chairman Ejaz Butt said that "a foreign coach does not suit us."

Woolmer was a different person and he did his best, but Lawson did not produce any results so we had to make a change," he said.

Lawson's appointment was surprising as he was preferred over two other Australian coaches -- Dav Whatmore and Richard Dunne -- who both had made their marks at international level.

Whatmore had guided Sri Lanka to their only World Cup title in 1996 before taking Bangladesh to the Super Eight Stages of the 2007 World Cup.

Dunne made his name as International Cricket Council's High Performance coach.

Lawson was only selected after Pakistani players vetoed the other two.

Although Pakistan finished runners-up to India in the Twenty20 World Cup held in South Africa -- Lawson's first assignment with the team -- they lost both the one-day and Test series against South Africa and India.

Alam named

FROM PAGE 17 middle-order batsman.

April 1999: Miandad resigns after falling out with senior players and is replaced by leg-spinner Mushtaq Mohammad for the 1999 World Cup.

Aug 1999: Mushtaq sacked after the World Cup. Wasim Raja, a former top batsman and leg-spinner, steps in.

Nov 1999: English-born Richard Pybus becomes Pakistan's first foreign coach.

Dec 1999: Alam takes over after Pybus is axed following Pakistan's 3-0 rout in a Test series in Australia.

Mar 2000: Miandad replaces Alam after Pakistan lost home series to Sri Lanka.

April 2001: Miandad sacked after Pakistan's tour of New Zealand and is replaced by Pybus.

WORLD CHESS C'SHIP Anand needs just one point to retain title

PTI, Bonn

Indian Grand Master Viswanathan Anand needs just one more point to retain the coveted World Chess Championship and will be looking to seal the fate of his opponent Vladimir Kramnik when the engrossing battle resumes on Sunday.

Anand is sitting pretty with a score of 5.5 points after the eighth game on Friday and the pressure will be on his Russian opponent who can hardly afford to commit any mistake at this stage.

Kramnik, who has 2.5 points to his credit, has been taken by surprise by the tactical moves by the Indian ace who appears to have done his home work well for the summit showdown which has generated considerable interest in the chess world.

What strategy Anand will adopt tomorrow remains to be seen but it should not come as a surprise if the Indian Grandmaster comes up with a new trick to unsettle his famed opponent and clinch the issue tomorrow itself in the 12-game world chess championship.

The onus will be on Kramnik to prevent Anand from taking the honour and he will have to come up with something different with black pieces to stay afloat in the championship.

The eighth game between the two stalwarts ended in a 39-move draw from Queen's gambit declined as Anand chose the sharp Vienna variation.

ECB raises prize money

AFP, London

As England's one-day team began preparations for a match which could net players one million dollars each, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) announced a 150 per cent increase in domestic prize money.

The board is keen to safeguard the primacy of Test cricket and the first-class game that prepares players for what most English fans still regard as the pinnacle of the sport.

To that end the total sum on offer to the winners of the four-day first-class County Championship will rise from 100,000 pounds to 500,000 pounds.

Players in the winning county will receive 350,000 pounds in prize money and the county itself collecting 150,000 pounds as a reward payment.

The total prize money and reward payment for the Championship will rise to 1.06 million pounds. The runners up will receive 225,000 pounds of which 175,000 pounds will go to the players and 50,000 to the county. In 2008 the runners-up received 40,000.

There were also what the ECB said were "significant rises" in the prize money and reward payments for the winners of the final NatWest Pro40 competition and for the county which lifts the Friends Provident Trophy at the Lord's final in late July.

I didn't accuse

FROM PAGE 17 had for each other continues to exist. The headlines arose from the manner in which some journalists interpreted a couple of points I have made in an about-to-be released autobiography.

Gilchrist said the Harbhajan hearing was too big an issue to ignore in his book. "My only real reference to it was to recall the way the events unfolded from the initial hearing, the night the match finished, through to the final judicial hearing a few weeks later."

Gilchrist said the references to Tendulkar not shaking his hand in the changing rooms after Tests were merely to highlight the cultural differences between the two countries. He said he never intended to question Tendulkar's sportsmanship.

"In the book, I mention that a cultural difference between our team and that of the Indians was the importance of shaking hands with the opposition after a loss," he said. "It's simply my thoughts and from my experiences it seemed that this routine wasn't as important to some oppositions as it was in Australia, where it is drilled into us from an early age."

"I made the comment that Sachin and Harbhajan were sometimes not around to shake hands. Whether that is right or wrong is not my point. It was more the cultural differences I was trying to highlight, which is fair to say, have been integral in most disputes or flare-ups between these two proud nations in the past."

Gilchrist said he had nothing against India and that he had always enjoyed touring the country. "I also feel that people who know me, or people who read the book in its entirety, will know only too well the sincere affection I have for India as a country and the very friendly, passionate people that live here."

Jose wants to be Italian

Football

AFP, Milan

Inter Milan coach Jose Mourinho was up to his old tricks again on Saturday, toying with the Italian press and claiming he needs to become more Italian.

Mourinho was well known for his sound bites during a little more than three years in England, often providing the content for column inches with his outrageous claims.

The Italian press have not taken to him yet and were particularly outraged when he failed to turn up to a post match press conference earlier in the season, sending his assistant Giuseppe Baresi instead.

And ahead of Sunday's visit of Genoa, he poked fun at the Italian way of doing things when refusing to divulge his formation for the match.

"I'm Italianising myself, I need to become more Italian, I'm also trying to become a nicer person," he said.

"We have to respect our opponents, they know how to play, they've got great players and always play good football.

"Hence, the match will be tough. Hopefully Inter will have more of the ball and more chances but we still have to defend well because Genoa know how to make the most of their opportunities."

Mourinho refused to be drawn on the wisdom of AC Milan's pursuit of David Beckham, claiming it was "his concern."

"If Beckham comes to Milan I'll be happy, it will be a pleasure to meet him because he's a very polite and calm guy," he said.

"It's not my problem if his choice is good for him or if Carlo (Ancelotti, the AC Milan coach) will be happy or not.

"I only think about Milan twice a year or maybe three or four times if we meet in the Coppa Italia.

"I don't care who Milan sign. I'm Inter's coach and that's it, I don't want to be anyone more than that."

Mourinho also hit out at the French as he is without midfielder Patrick Vieira, who returned from international duty last week

injured. "He's getting a bit better but he can't play yet. I also had French players at Chelsea and it was always the same thing.

"They came back injured from international duty or they got injured a few days later.

"I'm worried about losing Vieira for several more weeks."

Mourinho said he hoped France wouldn't call up the former Arsenal and Juventus midfielder for a friendly in November.

"France's next official match is in 2009 and given that the player has always had problems when he goes (on international duty) the most logical thing would be to leave him to work at his club and call him up in 2009," he said.

"But I bet for this friendly in November he'll be called up. When I arrived here Mourinho was injured with the national team, then he came back playing very well, he played four matches in a row for the first time in many years, he was really playing well.

"Then he got injured again and now he's out."

Mourinho is also without Esteban Cambiasso and Luis Jimenez but Brazilian full-back Maxwell is available again and goalkeeper Julio Cesar will take over in goal from Francesco Toldo, who made a rare appearance in midweek against Anorthosis Famagusta.

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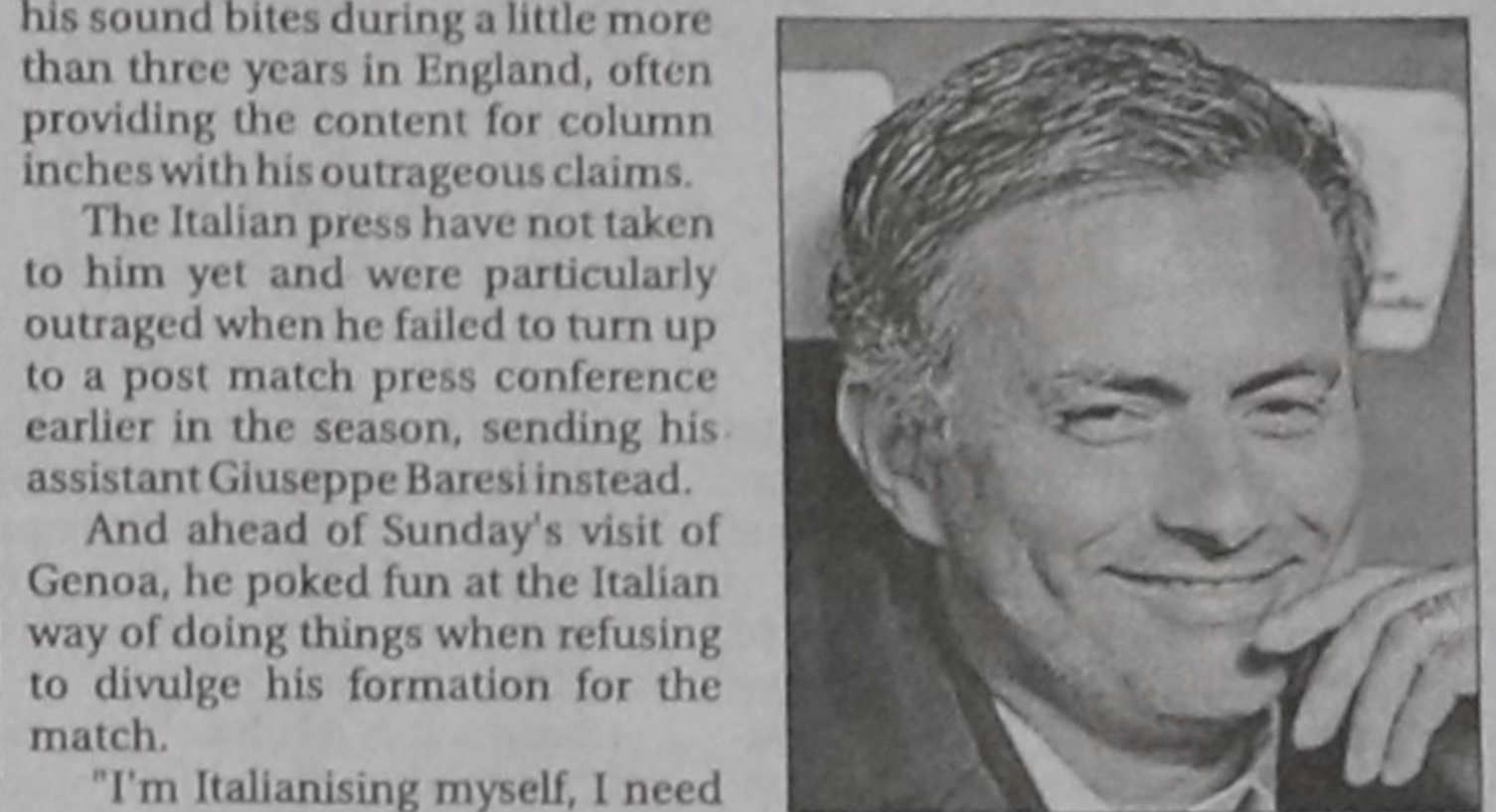
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JOSE MOURINHO

Nalbandian-Federer final

Tennis

AFP, Basel

David Nalbandian reached his fourth final in seven attempts at the Swiss Indoors as the Argentine re-established order in the ranks with a 6-4, 6-4 defeat of compatriot Juan Del Potro on Saturday.

Nalbandian, seeded second, will face off against the winner from local hero Roger Federer and fast-courting Spaniard Feliciano Lopez, the Dubai finalist in February.

The result was the reverse of last week in Madrid, when the 20-year-old Del Potro, ranked ninth in the world to his countryman's eighth, triumphed in straight sets in the Madrid third round.

"It all depends on who wakes up feeling better," said Nalbandian, who won in 80 minutes in a match featuring nearly 40 aggregate unforced errors.

"Today I was lucky and last week it was him. He is a good player, it was an even match. My serve worked well for me today, I was really focusing on it."

Nalbandian won the Basel title in 2002 and played the next two finals. His title match at the St Jakobshalle is his second in three weeks indoors after winning Stockholm this month.

The victory handed back Argentine bragging rights back as the pair played for the third time with Nalbandian now in 2-1 command.

The South Americans both remain in the chase for one of three spots left in the season-ending Masters Cup from November 8 in Shanghai, with Nalbandian advancing to provisional 13th from 16th with his victory.

The spots will all be determined next week in Paris at the wrap event of the season in the Bercy arena.

Del Potro, winner of four straight titles over the summer, stands seventh in the eight-man race to Shanghai, where he is keen to make a first appearance after his 2008 breakthrough.

Nalbandian claimed the opening set in 40 minutes, then consolidated with a break for 2-1 in the second set against an opponent who has admitted that his run of form over the past three months is starting to catch up.

AKS, Scholastica

FROM PAGE 17

Azampur Girls High School 5-2. Karishma put the winners in the fourth minute but Papiya leveled the score after a minute. Zara made it 2-1 by scoring in the tenth minute, and then Zerim scored in the 11th, 26th and 30th minutes to complete her hat-trick. Papiya netted her second goal in the 39th minute to reduce the margin.

In the day's third and last match, Green Herald International School beat Rajdhani High School 2-0 goals at the same venue.

Rimi and Annesha scored one each for the winners.



World number one Rafael Nadal (L) of Spain receives the Prince of Asturias Award Laureate for Sports from Spain's Prince Felipe during a ceremony at the Campoamor Theater in Oviedo on Friday.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 34 Solidly 35 British money heart of summer? 4 Highway 8 Grand opening day? 12 Snoop Dogg's genre 13 Incite 14 Shill bark 15 Way back when 16 Resumes, sorta 17 Den 18 In a good position 21 - U.S. Pat. Off. 22 Cartesian conclusion 23 Great praise 26 Pigs' digs 27 ailment 30 Scratched (out) 31 Place-kicker's pride 32 "Buenos 33 Evergreen type

Grid for crossword puzzle with numbers 1-33.

Solution time: 27 mins.

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DOWN 20 Bob's longtime partner 23 Crucial trio 24 Luau 25 Drop on the lawn 26 Fa-la connector 27 Shark part 28 Fond du --, Wis. 29 Exploit 31 Type of liquor 32 Ms. Moore 34 Pantheon member 35 Throbs 36 Critical one 37 Cut corners 38 "Do --" others... 39 Greasy stuff 40 Traditional tales 41 Pull an all-nighter 42 Pleasant 43 Needing Grecian Formula 44 Withered

ETLIC DTGGT-ATVAIVT FVMMNG TGLTK HDN TKHTJX OVIEIVVIC HITVQGY GN FKNMDIX: JNYQ ATVI. Yesterday's Cryptquip: WHAT WORDS COULD YOU USE IN REFERENCE TO GROUPS OF REGULAR, COMMON SAILORS? THE AHQY POLLO. Today's Cryptquip Clue: A equals B