

Farhat confirms their stance

CRICINFO, *undated*

Lahore Badshahs opener Imran Farhat has dismissed suggestions that Pakistani players in the ICL wanted to end their contracts and play for the national side again given the unofficial league's uncertain future.

He also refuted claims that along with other players they had given it in writing to the PCB that they would terminate their ICL contracts if reconsidered for selection. "I think there is some misunderstanding," Farhat told a private TV channel. "I have given no undertaking to the board that I will cancel my ICL contract if they select me for Pakistan.

"It is also wrong to say that the ICL is being wound up and that they have already cancelled our contracts which is why some of the players now are offering to play for Pakistan again."

Farhat, 26, who has played 26 Tests and 33 ODIs for Pakistan, said the ICL had not informed him or most of the other players of any plans to cancel their contracts. However, Farhat and Mumbai Champs batsman Hasan Raza, who was also present during the talk show, said their priority was to always play for Pakistan and if they were selected they would rethink their future options.

"As it is, the ICL contract never prevented us from playing for our country even during the League if we were required for national duty," Raza said. "It is the board's decision to ban us and this only hurt Pakistan."

"We got a chance to play in the ICL at a time when, despite consistent performances, the national selectors and the board were ignoring us. Cricket is our bread and butter and the ICL took good care of us financially," Farhat said.

He also said the players were not worried about not receiving any payments from the ICL for some months. "They are good paymasters and have taken good care of us. A few months' delay is no issue. We know eventually we will have our dues cleared."

Kallis

FROM PAGE 17
unchanged team, while Australia brought in seam bowler Geeves for Ben Laughlin.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of South Africa innings in the third one-day international against Australia at Newlands in Cape Town on Thursday:

SOUTHAFRICA

Gibbs c Hopes b Bracken 26
Smith c Haddin b Johnson 8
Kallis c Hopes b Geeves 70
De Villiers c Hauritz b Johnson 80
Duminy c MEK Hussey b Johnson 32
Morkel b Johnson 29
Boucher not out 28
Van der Merwe not out 6
Extras: (1b-4, w-2, nb-4) 10
Total: (For 6 wkt in 50 overs) 289
To bat: Botha, Steyn, Parnell.
Fall of wickets: 1-28, 2-50, 3-164, 4-198, 5-230, 6-283.

Bowler O M R W
Johnson 10 2 34 4
Bracken 10 0 58 1
Geeves 10 0 67 1
Hauritz 8 0 37 0
Hopes 8 0 64 0
Hussey 4 0 25 0

AUSTRALIA: Haddin, Clarke, Ponting, D Hussey, M Hussey, Ferguson, Hopes, Johnson, Hauritz, Geeves, Bracken, Toss: South Africa.

LOCAL SNIPS

FROM PAGE 17
Sangha amassed 300 runs for six wickets in stipulated 50 overs with Imtiaz scoring 88 runs. Tapash Sharma grabbed three wickets for 47 runs.

In reply, Body Line was dismissed cheaply for 107 runs in 26.5 overs with Omar Faruk making 18 runs. Ariful Islam captured five wickets for 21 runs.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HANDBALL

Six 'Ka' zone matches of the EXIM Bank 20th National Women's Handball Championship were held at the local stadium in Rangpur.

In the day's matches host Rangpur beat Gaibandha 12-2, Kurigram defeated Joypurhat 5-3, Rajshahi outplayed Natore 15-0, Ranpur thrashed Tangail 9-6, Dinajpur DSA beat Kurigram 9-7 and Nilphamari crushed Natore 15-2.

Divisional Commissioner of Rajshahi M Hafizur Rahman Bhuiyan opened the zonal phase of the national women's handball meet at the function.

Safina set to take over Serena

Tennis

AFP, Paris

Russia's Dinara Safina will depose Serena Williams as world number one, despite never having won a Grand Slam title.

The 22-year-old Safina, whose brother Marat Safin was the men's top player in the world in 2000, will replace Williams who has been on top for 11 consecutive weeks and 72 in all on April 20.

"It's a great honour to reach the No. 1 ranking and it is a dream that every girl who has ever wanted to play professional tennis shares," said Safina, the runner-up to Williams at the Australian Open this year.

"It is even extra special for

me since my brother Marat was able to reach the No. 1 ranking and I am happy to share this achievement with him.

"There's no question that while I am very proud of my results over the past year, I would have liked to reach this achievement in a different manner. I hope to prove to everyone over the coming months that I merit the honour of being World No. 1."

Safina is only the second Russian woman, along with Maria Sharapova, to hold the top spot.

Her elevation was announced just after Williams suffered a shock 6-4, 3-6, 6-1 first-round defeat against world number 95 Klara Zakopalova of the Czech Republic in Marbella.

Safina becomes the 19th

world number one following Chris Evert, Evonne Goolagong-Cawley, Martina Navratilova, Tracy Austin, Serena Williams, Venus Williams, Justine Henin, Kim Clijsters, Jennifer Capriati, Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, Amelie Mauresmo, Monica Seles, Steffi Graf, Martina Hingis, Lindsay Davenport, Sharapova, Ana Ivanovic and Jelena Jankovic.

Over the past year, Safina has won four WTA Tour singles titles - Montreal, Los Angeles, Berlin and Tokyo and was runner-up five times, including the Australian Open and Roland Garros.

She was also a silver medalist at the Beijing Olympics.

Her move up the rankings will represent the first time a brother and sister have been number one in the world.



DINARA SAFINA

Barca blitz Bayern

FROM PAGE 17

Bayern coach Juergen Klinsmann said: "It will be a short night. A defeat like that is hard to digest."

Liverpool attacked Chelsea from the outset at Anfield, but after taking the early lead, Chelsea's threat was growing.

Ivanovic soon raced in undetected between Martin Skrtel and Albert Riera and soared to meet Florent Malouda's corner for the equalizer in the 39th minute.

Chelsea nearly took the lead in the 51st but Jamie Carragher cleared a shot from Drogba off the line after the Ivory Coast striker had taken hold of Fabio Aurelio's backpass.

Ivanovic, however, replicated his first goal by beating Liverpool goalkeeper Pepe Reina after rising to meet a corner from Frank Lampard in the 62nd.

"We had three players around but we didn't stop him," Liverpool manager Rafa Benitez said. "It was a free header."

Drogba tapped in the final goal in the 67th when

Malouda released Michael Ballack, who squared the ball across the penalty area for the onrushing striker to tap into the net.

On Tuesday, FC Porto scored a late equalizer to hold off Manchester United to a 2-2 draw at Old Trafford, and Arsenal scored in the second half to earn a 1-1 draw at Villarreal. The second legs will be played Wednesday.

The final is scheduled for May 27 in Rome.

Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 17

tournament," Anvir said.

"We will try to beat Oman, a comparatively weaker team and we will also try to play competitive hockey with the other contesting teams."

Bangladesh finished 8th in the last Asia Cup Hockey.

Anvir has also informed that after a three-day short vacation, German coaching director Rach Gerhard Peter and team coach Oliver Michael would join the camp today to take charge of the team till the tournament starts.

'We started a dream'

FROM PAGE 17

DS: Do you think that the Super Cup was a cosmetic surgery done to give football in Dhaka a facelift because what happened here is not the real picture of the whole country?

AR: The life people see in Dhaka is not real. Outside it is completely different and more than 60 percent people are below poverty. So doing some cosmetic surgery in the capital doesn't have value. We want to reach those people through football. We will not get overnight results by building football schools or academies. We need to go to grassroots and make resources available for them. The target should be qualifying for the 2022 World Cup. It's not impossible.

AR: The special message is that you don't stop after achieving some initial results. It's a temptation to sit back and say yes we have done a good job. But the job we have done so far is just the beginning. If we stop here, all the good work we've done is wasted. We have been here for a short time. Our responsibility is to lay a foundation on which our future generations can achieve better results.

And if we don't do that, we have done a great disturbance for the future generation. We've got to go forward.

achieved something and we need to carry on. Within our lifetime we have set a vision: Bangladesh qualifying for the 2020 WC. May be we will achieve it, may be we won't. But if we don't try, we can't get close to it. If we try and get close to it, may be the next generation will be able to do it.

We had a generation of players like Salahuddin who took the game to one level. But we didn't build on it and take it to the next level. We went backwards. Now we have to start from the beginning. Whether we stay or not doesn't matter, Citycell wants to be remembered as the company that started the revival of football.

One day Bangladesh will be somewhere else and Citycell no longer be there but we can say we started a dream. We don't remain satisfied with what we have. We need to go forward.

Khelaghbar's dream come true

FROM PAGE 17

League after being demoted last season. After bowling out Jatrabari for just 173 in 48.3 overs with wickets from left-armers Rokibul (2-21) and Apurba (2-28), the in-form openers Shaon (99) and Tareq (75*) took only 34.1 overs to knock out the Dazzlers.

Baridhara Dazzlers, another team who had a semblance of a chance if Kalabagan and Eskaton both lost, also won their last game by 11 runs against Azad Sporting Club at the Dhaka University ground.

Legpacer Nur Hossain Munna took three for 21 to make it 47 wickets this season, a record in domestic one-day cricket. He broke Tigers left-arm spinner Enamul Haque Jr's 46-wicket mark made eight seasons ago.

At the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium, Bangladesh Boys (239-7 in 38.3 overs) defeated Indra Road (246-9) by three wickets by the

Duckworth-Lewis method after rain interrupted play for 30 minutes in the afternoon.

Batting first, Indira again got a good start from openers Shujon (73) and Rubel (62) and it was looking all Indira's way when paceman Ashik took four for 43 but an unbroken seventh wicket stand between Azad (70*) and Ferdous (55*) took Bangladesh Boys home.

POINTS TABLE

	M	W	L	T/A	Pts
Khelaghbar	16	12	4	0	24
Kalabagan	16	11	5	0	22
Baridhara	16	10	5	1	21
Bangladesh Boys	16	10	6	0	20
Eskaton	16	10	6	0	20
Jatrabari	16	9	7	0	18
Azad Sporting	16	8	8	0	16
Indra Road	16	8	8	0	16

Roger changes his mind

AFP, Paris

Roger Federer has reversed his initial decision and will now take part in the opening claycourt tournament of the season, the Monte Carlo Masters, organisers said Thursday.

The world number two from Switzerland had originally planned to play less in claycourt competition in 2009 than in past years, and he has only signed up for Rome and Madrid as preparation for the French Open.

Organisers of the April 11-19 Monte Carlo Masters had kept Federer a wildcard in the hope he changed his mind.

"We never lost hope that he would play," admitted tournament director Zejliko Franulovic.

Federer has endured a disappointing start to the season in his own high standards, failing to win a tournament and losing more ground on arch-rival and world number one Rafael Nadal of Spain.

Federer has never won in Monte Carlo, and has lost the final of the last three tournaments to the Spaniard.

The selectors, however, have opted for a faster track. Chosen as a specialist batsman, Watson will almost certainly be restored to the top of the Australian one-day order - the position he held down throughout last year's West Indies tour - alongside the recalled Shaun Marsh in the UAE. That has resulted in a major alteration to Watson's comeback blueprint, and his immediate travel schedule.

"I wasn't counting on it at all," Watson told Cricinfo. "I only arrived in South Africa on Monday night, and was looking ahead to the couple of practice games coming up for Rajasthan in the next few days. Now it looks like I'll probably

Watson surprised

CRICINFO, *undated*

Shane Watson didn't see it coming. Stationed in Johannesburg with the Rajasthan Royals, the Australian allrounder was caught completely off-guard when Michael Brown, Cricket Australia's operations manager, phoned on Wednesday to inform him of his recall to the national squad for the one-day tour of Pakistan.

Watson had identified the IPL as the platform from which to continue his comeback from back stress fractures. From there, he hoped to steadily increase his bowling workload throughout April and May, and should all have gone to plan, to catch the attention of Australia's selectors ahead of the ICC World Twenty20 in June.

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"I wasn't counting on it at all," Watson told Cricinfo. "I only arrived in South Africa on Monday night, and was looking ahead to the couple of practice games coming up for Rajasthan in the next few days. Now it looks like I'll probably

only be here for a week or so before I fly to Dubai.

"Things have moved faster than I expected. I have spoken with the owner and the coach (of Rajasthan) and they are disappointed that I won't be available for them for a while, but very excited for me. They know that to get back into the Australian side and play international cricket is my ultimate objective. I will still be available for two weeks after returning from Dubai. Hopefully Rajasthan can make it through to the final, so I can extend my time with them for as long as I can."

In all, Watson has opened the