

Saqlain wants to teach doosra

CRICINFO, undated

Saqlain Mushtaq, the former Pakistan offspinner, has offered to coach Australia's spinners on bowling the doosra, the away-spinning delivery which he is credited with inventing. Saqlain's offer comes in the wake of Australia's struggle to pick the delivery during the ongoing ODI series against Pakistan in the UAE.

"If there is any opportunity for me to work in Australia, I would love to take that opportunity," Saqlain told the Sydney Morning Herald. "I can teach them [the doosra] if they want my services."

The ICC rules allow a maximum limit of 15 degrees of flexion, which means no bowler can extend their elbow beyond that level, but Saqlain felt it was possible to bowl the doosra within the laws. Saqlain incidentally has a level-two coaching certificate.

PCB fines

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Friday, accused Watson, via the media, of complaining to the on-field umpires about it.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) subsequently announced that Ajmal's suspect doosra delivery had been reported by the umpires.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) director operations Zakir Khan said team manager Yawar Saad conducted an inquiry into the comments.

"Ajmal violated the PCB code of conduct by giving interviews to the media without prior permission of the manager and his comments against other team's players were unacceptable," Khan told AFP, without giving the amount of the fine.

As well as the PCB's punishment, Ajmal can also be penalised by the ICC for his comments which are a violation under their code of conduct.

Australian skipper Michael Clarke has denied Watson or any of his players approached the umpires to complain about Ajmal's action.

Perera's ton

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shared 165 runs for the sixth wicket with Imesh Udayange who made an enterprising 78 off 127 balls. The Lankans were troubled by the pace of paceman Kamrul Islam Rabbi who picked up three for 36 from his eleven overs. Captain Mahmudul Hasan also took two wickets while there was one for leg-spinner Sabbir Rahman Rumman.

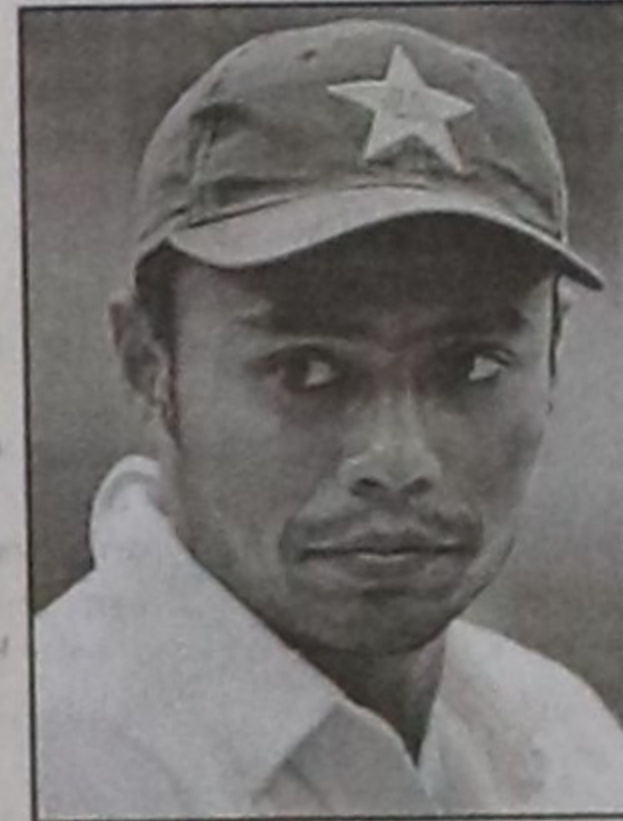
Earlier in the day, Noor Hossain Munna got out immediately after reaching 50 as the remaining home batsmen did not last long. Taibur Rahman, who was unbeaten on 54 when the day started, scored 79 off 226 balls with the help of eight boundaries.

The two teams now play a five-match one-day series that begins in Jessore.



Did U Know?

Kim Zmeskal was the first American gymnast to win the world All-Around title in 1991.



Danish Kaneria

(Pakistan leg-spinner) "The Indian Premier League would have been the ideal platform to dismiss this impression that I cannot play Twenty20 cricket. I have been doing well for Essex in this format for the last couple of years and I want to show people that I am not just a bowler suited to Test and first-class cricket."



President of Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) Sheikh Ahmad Al Sabah (L) presents the OCA "Award of Merit" to Gen Moeen U Ahmed (R) for his contribution to the development of Bangladesh sport at the Radisson Hotel yesterday. Gen Moeen is the second Bangladeshi to get the prestigious OCA award after late sports organiser Zafar Imam. The OCA President left the capital last night.

McCullum to quit?

CRICINFO, undated



Brendon McCullum has reiterated his stand of resigning as captain of Kolkata Knight Riders if the team doesn't reach the semi-finals of the current IPL tournament. He also said the toughest thing he was facing as a captain was his own poor form.

"I think every captain should be accountable for the results," McCullum said, echoing his statements after Kolkata's heavy defeat to Mumbai Indians on Monday. "You just can't drift along the journey; there is no accountability behind it. My job as a captain is to inspire the team and be competitive. If I can't inspire this bunch of talented people and reach the semi-finals then, yes, I will resign."

McCullum has presided over a woeful run for Kolkata - one win and one no result yielding three points in five games - and he believes it's down to a poor performance in the first six overs with bat and ball. "We are failing to do any damage in the top six overs either way. We haven't taken wickets at the start and we haven't scored much runs at the top. We are always been behind the game. Hopefully I will start scoring and get that right."

McCullum said that his lack of runs as a batsman has been tough for him to handle as a captain. "It's tough when you are delivering messages to the team. You don't have individual performances to stack up behind those talks. But you have to put aside individ-

ual disappointments and concentrate on what the team needs to do. If I can get the runs, though, and help these individuals it would be nice."

Has the captaincy affected his batting? "Well... I haven't gone past two overs! So I can't say that. When I go into bat, I am not thinking about captaincy. For me batting is enjoyment and fun. I don't play with that kind of responsibility when I go out. There is a clear difference, he says, between being a player and being a captain. "It hurts more when you lose as a captain. Twenty times more! It's just incredibly disappointing; it's tough."

For all the difficulties associated with the captaincy, McCullum appreciates the mental challenge. "The best part of it is, you get an opportunity to use your ideas and strategies on the game. When you walk off the park you know you have had the opportunity or making a mark on the game, win or lose."

McCullum inherits the captaincy from Sourav Ganguly, the team's icon player, and amid some controversy over the "multiple captaincy" theory. It could have been easier had he taken over from someone with less of an emotional hold on the team and the city - a Dravid, perhaps, or a Kallis. McCullum, however, denies any additional pressure on that account. "Sourav has been fantastic. I haven't take notice of the controversy. I am a very competitive guy, and I'm passionate about playing for this side. It's an honour to lead a side with talents like this. I am not bothered about the captaincy controversy."

Challenge

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who will lead the Bangladesh side in the ground and wicket as well as facilities committee of the tournament.

"We didn't give any decision about venues in the meeting. We have seven ICC approved ODI venues but BCB will decide the venues after discussion with the government. But what we assured was that the meeting that we will offer international standard venues and sporting wickets," Munna said adding that it's up to government whether they prepare a new venue for the tournament.

It was told after ICC's meeting last February that Bangladesh has been lagging behind in the preparation but Anam informed that they have already started the preliminary works after that meeting.

"You may not have seen the physical improvement but that doesn't mean we sit idle. We are getting support from the government and the initial work already started. It's true for this World Cup the commercial requirement for the venues are totally different from the previous ones but still we don't feel pressure

with the additional matches," said a confident Anam.

The bearded organiser showered praise on BCB's president Jamali for his far-sighted role to bring more matches in the country when question was raised whether the organisers did enough to get at least one semifinal.

"What we think is that it is a great achievement to earn eight matches as a youngest country among the co-hosts. I must thank my president as his brilliant role helped us to get three more matches. We can recall the 1996 World Cup in the subcontinent where Sri Lanka had only four matches as the youngest member," he said while defending their position.

India will host the final and a semifinal while Sri Lanka will stage the other semifinal. The other two quarterfinal will each be hosted by the two co-hosts.

Bangladesh will stage eight matches as well as the opening ceremony on February 18, 2011. India will host 29 of the 49 matches across eight venues and Sri Lanka will host 12 in three venues.

BCB cool on

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"The contract we have with the ICL is pretty much one-way. The players cannot scrap or resign but they can decide whether to renew our contracts so it is an almost impossible situation for us," said former Bangladesh captain Bashar.

But if Hemang Badani is to be believed, it does not look as bad for the ICL players. "Some of us have been stuck with the ICL and not knowing where we are headed cricket-wise, especially after the March programme was cancelled," Badani told Cricinfo.

"Some of the ICL money due to us was not coming through either, possibly due to the recession. But mostly some of us were frustrated because there just hasn't been enough cricket for us in the ICL. Of course, we played some good cricket in the ICL but not the quantity we expected."

Immediately after the BCCI announced the amnesty offer, the ICL released the following statement: "Taking forward its sports performance evaluation process across all cricket operations, the ICL management has decided not to renew the contracts of some of the ICL players and support staff that have expired," the statement, by the ICL's head Himanshu Mody, said. "As cricket professionals they are free to decide and explore their options."

India cancel

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as the third team for the triangular series by Srinivasan in a media communication earlier but Cricket South Africa stated it had never planned to participate in the proposed event.

India's cricketers are currently involved in the IPL, and will then take part in the ICC World Twenty20 in England, running from June 5 to 21. "We will have a ODI series afterwards in the West Indies, comprising four or five matches, and then will take part in the ICC Champions Trophy," Srinivasan said. He also announced India's rather packed playing schedule following the team's return from South Africa.

India will host the Champions Twenty20 League - cancelled last year in the aftermath of the Mumbai terror attacks - and play a seven-match ODI series against Australia at home. Sri Lanka are scheduled to visit India for a full Test and ODI series, after which India would tour Bangladesh in January. "On our return we would host South Africa," Srinivasan said.

BCCI offers ICL players 'amnesty'

CRICINFO, undated

The Indian board has announced an "amnesty" for all Indian players associated with the ICL, who can return to official cricket provided they cut all ties with the unofficial league by May 31. The players who choose to return to the official fold will be eligible to play international cricket after a one-year 'cooling period' but can play domestic cricket from June 1, when the ICC's new rules on official and unofficial cricket come into force.

"A lot of cricketers and support staff with the ICL met us and told us that they committed a mistake by joining the ICL and they want to return to the BCCI," Shashank Manohar, the BCCI president, said after a meeting of the board, where the decision was taken. "They will be allowed to play domestic cricket immediately."

It's learnt that other national boards who have banned their ICL players from official cricket are expected to follow suit. There are at least 85 Indian and 60 foreign players aligned with the ICL, which is bankrolled by India's largest listed media company, Zee Telefilms and headed by the country's lone World Cup winning captain Kapil Dev.

The country standing to gain the most from the decision is Pakistan, which has 20 players in the ICL of whom half - including Mohammad Yousuf - could expect to play for the national side. New Zealand, which has lost its most potent fast bowler, Shane Bond, has already said it could waive the cooling-off period.

Nat'l v'ball on

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

The Spectra National Volleyball Championship got underway at Ishwardi Upazila in Pabna on Wednesday.

Bangladesh Army and Bangladesh Police won their opening games against Chittagong and Dhaka respectively by identical 3-0 sets.

It is for the first time a national volleyball championship is being staged in an Upazila.

State Minister for Power and Energy Advocate Samsul Haque Tuku inaugurated the competition at a colourful ceremony at Shara Marwar School in the afternoon.

Bangladesh Volleyball Federation secretary Ashikur Rahman Miku, deputy commissioner of Pabna Dr AFM Monjur Kadir and Pabna Police Superintendent Jamil Ahmed were also present on the occasion.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

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stands involving Hasan. For the hosts, Ravi Prasad and Imon Ghosh took two wickets each.

NATIONAL CLUB CUP

A one-wicket victory over Shishu Park XI saved Top Sports Club's blushes in the opening match of the National Club Cup cricket tournament at the Shaheed Bhulul Stadium in Noakhali yesterday.

Chasing 208 for victory, the hosts were in deep trouble after Asaduzzaman (70) was the ninth man out with the team's score on 196. But Iqbal turned the game around with a six-ball 14 that included two fours and a six as the Noakhali club took a huge sigh of relief.

Asad was patient in his approach, slamming ten boundaries in his 93-ball knock.

Earlier, Iqbal also started with the lball by taking three wickets for 36 and so did Masud, who picked up three for 28 as Bandarban's Shishu Park XI made 207 from 46.5 overs.

UNDER-15 CRICKET

Superb all-round performances from Sajid Akhtar and Mohammad Jahid gave Bangladesh Under-15s a massive 144-run victory in the second one-day against CAB Under-15s at the Mymensingh Stadium yesterday.

Sajid crashed seven boundaries in his 47-ball 51 as the hosts made a formidable 266 all out in 49.3 overs, before he took three wickets for just six runs to help bowl out the tourists for only 122 runs in 36.3 overs.

Apart from Sajid, Mohammad Jahid slammed a quickfire 67 off 54 balls before picking up two wickets.

WOMEN'S CRICKET

Bangladesh Ansar & VDP blew away Victoria Sporting Club by ten wickets in the Women's Club Cup tournament at the City Club ground yesterday.

After electing to bat first, Victoria were bowled out for 81 from 33.5 overs. Ansar took only 11.5 overs to overtake the total with Ayesha Akhtar cracking 41 off 36 balls. Her partner Shahnaz Akhtarmade 25 off 35 balls.

At the Gulshan Youth ground, BKSP (192-7) beat Dipali Juba Sangha (110 all out) by 82 runs with a good half-century from Rozina Akhtar.

Brett's eyes on Ashes

AFP, Abu Dhabi

Australia's spearhead Brett Lee said Wednesday he hoped to be at his best in time for the Ashes, saying he had the knowledge to be leading his team's bowling against England in two months' time.

The 32-year-old, who has not played due to injury since last year's Boxing Day Test against South Africa, has been progressing well towards full fitness after ankle surgery in January.

He arrived in Abu Dhabi Tuesday and on Wednesday trained with the Australian squad, which is currently taking part in a limited-overs series against Pakistan.

Australian team doctor Trefor James said Lee would be monitored and may be considered for selection during the current tour.

Australia lead the series 2-1 after winning the second match in Dubai by six wickets Friday and the third match here Monday by 27 runs. Pakistan won the first match, in Dubai, by four wickets last Wednesday.

The remaining two matches will be played

here on Friday and Sunday.

Lee said he was happy with his progress. "I am really close (to full fitness)," he said after his session in the nets. "The main aim here is the Ashes, with all due respect to all other cricket."

"If I'm back to my best, which I hope to be doing, I don't see a problem at all (in being selected). Hopefully, my 10-year-career... will speak for itself - provided I am fit, of course."

Lee was confident that he could still spearhead the Australian attack, despite the fast-rising star of Mitchell Johnson, who has been rested for the Pakistan series.

"Even though I've been out of the team for three months it doesn't make any difference, you've still got that same knowledge," said Lee, who has 310 Test wickets at 30.81 and 303 one-day wickets at 22.95 in his career so far.

"I'll be trying my best to be a team leader. Do I want to get back to that number one spot? Definitely."

"Yeah, I'm 32, but there's no reason why I can't bowl faster. I'm the fittest I've been in a long, long time, provided the ankle holds up," said Lee, regarded as the world's fastest bowler alongside Pakistan's Shoaib Akhtar.



State Minister for Power and Energy Advocate Samsul Haque Tuku inaugurates the Spectra National Volleyball Championship at Shara Marwar School in Pabna yesterday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down.

ACROSS

1 Gotta (West) 36 Islands 56 ATF agents

DOWN

11 George Herman Ruth 20 Lottery winner, maybe 22 Different 24 Galileo, by birth 25 "Most Wanted" org. 26 Edge 27 Scepter 29 Scenery 30 Greek vowel 31 Upper House abbr. 35 Hardly a sluggard 36 Motion pictures 39 Part of Batman's costume 40 "Hi, sailor!" 41 Unaccompanied 43 Osk's river 45 Farm 46 Fork 47 Responsibility 49 Snapshot

Cryptogram puzzle with a grid and a key.

CRYPTOQUIP

S Z E I Z E U O D C G D H J P W J

U D C V H Z K B W G P D B F W B D

U V L D U S J Z A D K Z Z O W A Z E J

L D D G V Q K J P D V B I Z B O F

Yesterday's Cryptogram: NAME OF AN IMPORTANT FLAGSHIP STORE THAT ONLY SOLD LARGE, PRICED PIANOS: "GRAND CENTRAL"

Today's Cryptogram Clue: Z equals O