

## Anjum takes Akhtar's place

PTI, Dubai

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has cleared Iftikhar Anjum's name as a replacement of Shoaib Akhtar in the Pakistan Squad for the T20 World Cup, beginning next month in England.

ICC's Event Technical Committee cleared Anjum's name and the confirmation has been conveyed to the Pakistan Cricket Board, according to an ICC press release.

Shoaib as he was declared unfit by the PCB Medical Board on 21 May and they decided to have the paceman replaced.

The 28-year-old Iftikhar has played one Test, 58 ODIs and one T20 against Bangladesh in Nairobi in September 2007.

He was also a member of the Pakistan side which finished as the losing finalist to India in the inaugural ICC World Twenty20 in South Africa in 2007.

Any injury-based replacement requires a written submission to the Event Technical Committee along with a diagnosis from a medical practitioner as to the extent of the injury. Once replaced, a player cannot return to the squad.

Pakistan, who finished runners-up last time, will open their campaign against England at Lord's on June 7.

## As colourful as it can get

AFP, Johannesburg

A galaxy of Bollywood stars added glitz and glamour to the spectacular closing ceremony of the Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 championship after the final game won by Deccan Chargers here Sunday.

Music and fireworks displays filled the air soon after the last ball was bowled, creating an electric-charged carnival atmosphere.

The Wanderers Stadium was transformed into a sea of shimmering, floating lights which were released into the sky as frenzied fans waved to their favourite celebrities.

Actress Katrina Kaif led a dance troupe to the hugely popular Jai Ho tune, which has over the past weeks become an unofficial anthem at IPL cricket venues across the country.

But it was the Senegal-born American singing sensation Akon who diverted the lime-light from the Indian beauty and wowed the crowd with his Grammy Award winning hit song Smack That.

Akon went on to introduce the winner of the Miss Bollywood IPL South Africa, Dene Kossatz.

The crowd sang along Eddy Grant's Gimme Hope Jo'anna hit song as he took on the stage with traditional African drummers.

The five-week cricket bonanza had seen some of the biggest Bollywood celebrities and movie stars, like Shilpa Shetty, co-owner of the Rajasthan Royals, and Shah Rukh Khan of Kolkata Knight Riders setting up temporary home in South Africa.

IPL chief executive Lalit Modi described the five-week championship as a "huge success".

The event was attended by President Jacob Zuma, who praised the organisers for having faith in South Africa to host the event.

"The games have revitalised the economy, with about one billion rand (120.7 million dollars) being spent in the country in the past five weeks," said Zuma.

Established in 2008, the league was moved to South Africa over fears of insufficient security in India due to a date clash with general elections.

## BFF won't

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BCB when they put aside the BNS as a match venue because any other decision would simply stop the revival of football in the country under the leadership of Salahuddin.

But everything has changed suddenly when BCB, after an emergency meeting on Sunday, announced that the board of directors has unanimously decided that they would request the authorities concerned to take necessary steps for arranging World Cup matches at BNS.

According to BCB officials the emotional attachment with this stadium (BNS) was the reason behind taking the U-turn.

But the question all around was: then why didn't they raise their voice from the very beginning?



South African President Jacob Zuma (L) hands over the IPL Twenty20 trophy to the winning team captain Adam Gilchrist at the Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg on Sunday. Deccan Chargers defeated Royal Challengers Bangalore in the final by six runs.

## England want series

Final ODI against Windies today

### Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

England's momentum shows no sign of slowing after their impressive six-wicket win at Bristol Sunday and now their aim is to wrap up the three-match one-day series in style at Edgbaston on Tuesday before moving onto the ICC World Twenty20.

What will be even more pleasing for the management was that England won that second game at Bristol convincingly without Kevin Pietersen and Andrew Flintoff.

The bowling was impressive throughout, led by James Anderson and Stuart Broad, with Paul Collingwood nipping in with three key wickets. Andrew Strauss had a superb day in the field, too, when he introduced Graeme Swann against a charging Chris Gayle and the move paid off when Gayle missed a wild swing.

As good as England were, though, West Indies were awful. Their shot selection was woeful, the running poor and the general application gave a further impression of a team that isn't bothered. The decision to rest Fidel Edwards was also strange on one of the quickest pitches of the season so far. If Gayle can turn

on the style in Birmingham they could yet level the series, but don't bet on it.

Graeme Swann is having a great time of things at the moment and has the wood over a number of West Indies batsmen. When his first ball at Bristol was planted over long-on by Gayle, Swann didn't panic and removed the West Indies captain next ball. Gayle is unlikely to hold back if faced with Swann again, so this duel could have a second chapter in the final game. Strauss certainly won't be afraid of throwing Swann the ball.

The one West Indies player who can hold their head high is Dwayne Bravo after he made an attractive half-century and bowled with heart. But as hard as he tried he couldn't rouse his teammates out of their slumber. Without a doubt, his return strengthens the team, but he needs much more support than was shown on Sunday.

### TEAMS

ENGLAND (probable): Andrew Strauss (captain), Ravi Bopara, Matt Prior, Owais Shah, Paul Collingwood, Eoin Morgan, Dimitri Mascarenhas, Stuart Broad, Graeme Swann, Tim Bresnan, James Anderson.

WEST INDIES (probable): Chris Gayle (captain), Lendl Simmons, Ramaresh Sarwan, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Kieron Pollard, Dwayne Bravo, Denesh Ramdin, Darren Sammy, Jerome Taylor, Sulieman Benn, Fidel Edwards.

## Gilly bats for Simmo

### Cricket

AFP, Johannesburg

Victorious Deccan Chargers captain Adam Gilchrist said Monday he was surprised star all-rounder Andrew Symonds was not in the Australia Ashes squad.

Reflecting on his team's six-run win over Royal Challengers Bangalore in the Indian Premier League final Sunday, Gilchrist said Symonds had been a key player, not least when he took the wickets of Ross Taylor and Virat Kohli with successive balls to halt what seemed a Bangalore cruise to the title.

"He'd be in my team," said Gilchrist, who gave Symonds a glowing testimonial at odds with the player's "bad boy" reputation that cost him a place in the Australian squad against South Africa last season.

"Ever since I've played with Andrew Symonds he's been a real team man," said Gilchrist.

"You saw a glimpse of that last year when he only played four games - the respect he had from the Indian players and international players alike. He became an instant favourite in the squad."

"He's a great personality and a wonderful talent on the cricket field who can turn matches."

Gilchrist also had words of praise for VVS Laxman, the Indian Test star who was deposed as Deccan captain after the team finished bottom of the log last season.

"Although we made changes in the coaches and the captain, everyone in the squad bought into it, including VVS. He went through a lot emotionally. The captaincy was taken away from him and he only played five games, then the selectors decided we didn't need him."

Gilchrist said Laxman had remained a good team man despite being dropped.

"He continued to contribute around the group with his experience and his vast knowledge. He wants to learn to be a better Twenty20 player. That's a wonderful example to young players to see a player at his age wanting to evolve into a better player."

According to Gilchrist, Laxman worked with the team's coaches to improve his 20-overs skills.

"It's not just the young kids who are learning all the time, it applies to all of us. VVS epitomises what this franchise is all about."

Gilchrist said the team's turnaround had been due to several factors, including emphasising to the players to "make sure every ball is the most important thing in their life at that moment".

Adding strike bowlers had provided back-up for RP Singh, the tournament's leading wicket-taker, with first West Indian Fidel Edwards, then Australian Ryan Harris contributing to the bowling firepower.

Gilchrist said the team's owners had played a role by agreeing to his requests for some changes in personnel.

"The main one was [coach] Darren Lehmann, who has a wonderful cricket brain."

He also brought Australian fielding coach Mike Young and fitness trainer Steve Smith on board.

Gilchrist, who has retired from cricket except the IPL, said he looking forward to watching the World Twenty20 in England next month.

"The players who have been here for the IPL will have an advantage - as long as they get a chance to freshen up and have some time off before playing in another tournament."

## Ajmal

FROM PAGE 17

2007 World Cup final when he single-handedly destroyed Sri Lanka in Barbados, the veteran blitzed an incredible 85 off just 35 deliveries Friday to dump much-fancied Delhi Daredevils out of the five-week Twenty20 extravaganza.

But perhaps most astonishing has been how sharp his wicketkeeping remains, an attribute that turned the final on its head when he brilliantly stumped Virat Kohli off the bowling of Andrew Symonds to take Deccan's second wicket in two balls.

Bought for 700,000 dollars in the IPL auction last year, Gilchrist has been worth every cent, and while this may not equal the experience of winning World Cups the veteran is forced to admit that he's loved every moment.

"This is the only cricket I play now, so given what we've went through last year, this is just a really tremendous effort from the whole franchise to turn it around. It's just been a great experience."

Reviving memories of the

unmarked at the back post to turn home Kaka's cross.

Yet back came Roma again and they took the lead for the third time when captain Francesco Totti thumped home a free-kick with five minutes to play.

In other games champions Inter Milan were beaten 2-1 at Cagliari while Juventus won for the first time in eight matches, 3-0 at Siena to jump above Milan into second.

Lecce will join already-relegated Reggina in Serie B next season after Martin Jorgensen's last minute equaliser for Fiorentina earned them a 1-1 draw at Lecce.

Chievo secured their survival with a 0-0 draw against Bologna, who will have to wait until next weekend to see if they stay up.

Either they or Torino, who were beaten 3-2 at home to Genoa, will go down and they are level on 34 points.

That lead lasted only a minute as Ambrosini was left

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Safina said it was hard to feel sympathy for her opponent.

"When we shook hands, she said: 'At least you could have given me one game,'" revealed the Russian.

Also making progress were third seed Venus Williams, the 2002 runner-up, who saw off American compatriot Bethanie Mattek-Sands 6-1, 4-6, 6-2.

China's Zheng Jie, the 15th seed and Thai veteran Tamarine Tanasugarn kept Asian interest alive, but Japanese 33-year-old Ai Sugiyama, playing in her 15th Roland Garros, went out 6-3, 6-2 to France's Aravane Rezai.

Maria Sharapova is due to make her first Grand Slam appearance since Wimbledon last year when she tackles Anastasiya Yakimova of Belarus.

Elsewhere, in the men's first round, Russian 10th seed Nikolay Davydenko, twice a semi-finalist, eased past Austria's Stefan Koubek 6-2, 6-1, 6-4 with compatriot Mikhail Youzhny also advancing with a 7-6 (7/2), 6-1, 6-4 win over Luxembourg's Gilles Muller.

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## Champs League T20 in October

AFP, New Delhi

India will host a multi-nation Champions League Twenty20 competition in October to cash in on the growing popularity of the sport's shortest version, organisers said on Monday.

The tournament, featuring the top domestic T20 teams from seven countries, will be held from October 8-23, Indian Premier League (IPL) commissioner Lalit Modi said in a statement.

The 12-team event will offer six million dollars as prize money which Modi, who also heads the Champions League, said was the "biggest prize in world cricket at a domestic competition level."

India will field three teams, Australia, South Africa and England two each, while New Zealand, Sri Lanka and the West Indies will have one team each.

Pakistan, which was earlier nominated to send one team, will not feature this year due to Islamabad's refusal to send sporting teams to India amid political tensions between the neighbours, Modi said.

"Unfortunately, the Pakistan government won't give them [the players] clearance to come to India, and since Saturday was our cut-off date, it's not possible to have a team from Pakistan this year," Modi said.

India's Deccan Chargers and Bangalore Royal Challengers, who contested the IPL final in Johannesburg on Sunday, gained a direct entry into the Champions League along with Delhi Daredevils, who topped the IPL preliminary round.

Ajmal, who made his debut last year, has already taken 10 wickets in eight one-day internationals, while he managed one wicket in the only Twenty20 he played against Australia in Dubai earlier this month.

Ajmal's action while delivering a "doosra" -- a delivery equivalent of leg-spinner's googly -- was questioned by umpires in the second one-day match with Australia.

Ajmal said that the ICC decision removed a huge burden.

"I was carrying a 50-kilo bag on my head and Sunday's decision has allowed me to throw that bag off my head," Ajmal told AFP. "I now feel that my punishment is over and I am relieved and pleased."

Nadal, Safina

FROM PAGE 17

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## The IPL eleven

AFP, Johannesburg

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