#### **APL** starts October 6

PTI, Washington

With the successful completion of the second Indian Premier League in South Africa, stage is now all set for the American Premier League (APL), and the organisers claim that the APL would revolutionise cricket in the country of baseball.

Six teams -- Premium Americans, Premium Bangladeshis, Premium World, Premium Indians, Premium Pakistanis and Premium Windies -- would vie for the first APL trophy, the inaugural match of which is scheduled for October 6 at the Home of the Staten Island Yankees and the finals on October 23 and 24.

"Everything is going on schedule. The APL promises to change the face of cricket in the US," Jay Mir, president of the American Sports and Entertainment Group -- the organisers of the APL--told PTI. The first edition of the

Twenty20 tournament has attracted quite significant sponsorship bids, which Mir said is being finalised and would be announced soon.



England skipper Andrew Strauss (C) holds the trophy as he celebrates with teammates their one-day international series victory after the third and final match against the West Indies at Edgbaston on Tuesday.

## Yousuf gets ICL NOC

Cricket

AFP, Lahore

Former Pakistan batsman Mohammad Yousuf said Tuesday he had produced a letter confirming he had severed ties with a rebel Indian league, and was keen to revive his international career.

Yousuf last year defected to the Indian Cricket League (ICL), not recognised by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) or the International Cricket Council (ICC), leaving him barred from playing for Pakistan.

"I have submitted a no-objection certificate from the Indian league and it's now up to the authorities to clear my way to play international cricket," said 34-year-old Yousuf.

Yousuf and other Pakistani players who featured in the ICL received a reprieve in February when the Sindh high court suspended the ban on them.

The PCB, in line with other boards around the world, recently announced an amnesty for ICL players who gave up their links to

the league by May 31. Yousuf last week claimed he had broken his ties with the ICL

but the PCB demanded a copy of the no-objection letter.
"I have handed the letter to the PCB and now await their reply as I desperately want to play for my country," said Yousuf, who had played 79 Tests and 269 one-day internationals before joining the ICL in November last year.

The star batsman, who set a world record of 1,788 runs in 2006 -- the most in a calendar year -- joined the ICL in September 2007 in protest at being left out of Pakistan's squad for the inaugural World Twenty20.

The PCB management persuaded him to abandon the ICL contract and got him a contract with the Indian Premier League, sanctioned by both the BCCI and the ICC, but Yousuf rejoined the ICL in November last year.

# Prior seals series

### Cricket

AFP, Birmingham

Matt Prior's one-day international best of 87 set up England's 58-run win in the third and final match of their series against the West Indies

at Edgbaston here on Tuesday. Victory saw England win the series 2-0 after a six-wicket win in Bristol on Sunday following Thursday's washout at Headingley.

Wicketkeeper Prior's innings was the centrepiece of England's imposing total of 328 for seven in their permitted 50 overs.

That was their highest in this form of cricket against the West Indies, surpassing the 306 for five they made in a 55 overs per side match at the Oval in 1995.

West Indies, chasing 329 to win, finished well short on 270 all out.

Prior has not been selected for next month's World Twenty20 in England, with James Foster the hosts' spe-

cialist wicketkeeper. But the Sussex gloveman, who has been struggling with a right ring finger injury, was

not too disappointed. "I'm actually quite looking forward to having time off to get the finger right," man-ofthe-match Prior told report-

However, he added: "It's a in 2007. World Cup in your home country, of course you would

be gutted to miss out. "But there are a huge wicketdown.

amount of positives to have come out of the last month. I couldn't have wished for a better Test series and to get the opportunity at No 3 (in the

one-dayers) was fantastic." Defeat completed a miserable tour for the West Indies, who suffered a pair of heavy losses in their preceding 2-0

Test series loss to England. They only arrived in the early part of an English season after Sri Lanka, the scheduled tourists, had pulled out because of their players' commitments in the Indian Premier League.

West Indies captain Chris Gayle, whose side were beaten by six wickets in the second one-dayer in Bristol after the series opener at Headingley was washed out, did not look especially enthusiastic about having to cut short his time in the IPL to come on this tour.

Asked if this was one of his worst experiences as West Indies captain, Gayle replied: "It is. It wasn't the best but I have to give credit where it is due, England set the game up

in the batting department." Prior put on 149 for the third wicket with Owais Shah, who made an entertaining 75,

and chose to field. Prior, batting at No 3 in place of the injured Kevin Pietersen, saw his innings better the 52 he made against the West Indies at Edgbaston

Miscast as a 'pinch hitter' early in his career, Prior was happy to be batting at first-

"I was told you are batting at three in your own right," he

Gayle - a man whom the tourists would have been looking to for a big score - fell for just 11 when he miscued a pull off Stuart Broad to Ravi Bopara at mid-on.

And when England captain Andrew Strauss held a brilliant one-handed catch in the covers off Stuart Broad to get rid of Ramnaresh Sarwan, the West Indies had slumped to 22 for two.

Shivnarine Chanderpaul, a class player in all forms of the game, steadied the ship with an innings of 68 and put on 82 with wicketkeeper Denesh Ramdin (45).

But the run-rate was always against them and when they both fell in quick succession, Ramdin departing after a diving one-handed catch by Prior off James Anderson, the West Indies were 189 for six and the game all but over.

England openers Strauss (52) and Bopara (49) made a solid start.

The fifty came up in 62 balls and Bopara continued to find the boundary with some superb square-cuts and drives after Gayle had won the toss in a spell of four fours in nine

balls. But Bopara was one short of his fifty when he played on to Dwayne Bravo.

Strauss, who has opted out of the World Twenty20, did get to fifty, off 65 balls with seven fours, but his next ball saw him stumped by wicketkeeper Ramdin off giant spinner Sulieman Benn.

Strauss's Middlesex colleague Shah completed a runa-ball fifty in flamboyant fashion with a wristily pulled six off Bravo that also brought up a century partnership with

#### Prior. SCOREBOARD

Final scoreboard in the third one-day international between England and the West Indies at Edgbaston on Tuesday:

ENGLAND: 328 for 7 in 50 overs (Strauss 52, Bopara 49, Prior 87, Shah 75, Collingwood 23; Taylor 3-59, Pollard 2-63)

WESTINDIES Gayle c Bopara b Broad Morton run out Sarwan c Strauss b Anderson 9 Chanderpaul c Bopara b Broad Bravo lbw b Bresnan Ramdin c Prior b Anderson 45 Pollard run out Taylor run out Benn b Anderson Rampaul b Swann Edwards not out Extras: (b-2, lb-2, w-5) Total: (All out in 49.4 overs) 270 Fall of wickets: 1-13, 2-22, 3-66, 4-99, 5-181, 6-189, 7-212,

8-223, 9-254, 10-270. Bowler 0 63 Anderson 9.4 Mascarenhas 7 43 36 Bresnan 10 38 Swann Collingwood 5 0 28 Result: England won by 58 runs and clinched threematch series 2-0.

Man-of-the-match: Matt Prior.

Man-of-the-series: Stuart Broad.

#### Fans await

FROM PAGE 17 a police spokesman.

"We don't yet know the exact nature of this incident but it was possibly related to a fight although we cannot confirm that it had anything to do with tonight's match."

Three Spanish fans were arrested as they were driving into the capital, with clubs and a sharpened weapons confiscated from their vehicles.

Two English fans were also arrested at known troublespot Campo de Fiori for being drunk and bothering passers-

While shopkeepers have been grateful for the influx of tourists, some residents of the city have been less than pleased to have so many fans many of them wrapped in their team's flags -- on their doorstep.

"When I tried to go home last night, my street was blocked by dozens of English fans. They were knocking back pints of beer and chanting loudly," said one Rome resident who gave her name as Maria and is five months

pregnant. "My neighbours chucked some buckets of water at them but they wouldn't budge so I had to make a detour to get home.

Many of the players' wives and girlfriends will also be on hand at the game, and were pictured in Italian designer fashion as they flew out of Manchester and Barcelona.

Stacey Giggs, wife of veteran United winger Ryan, was among those who caught the Roman theme, dressed in a gladiator-style metal studded vest top.

The players themselves were keeping a low profile prior to kick-off but Swiss referee Massimo Busacca and his two assistants did venture out to the Vatican where they received an audience with Pope Benedict XVI.

# 'Give T20 respect'

CRICINFO, undated



Nielsen has called on cricket's administrators to show greater respect to the Twenty20 format and end its "exhibition" status Twenty20.

at international level. As Australia prepared to depart for the ICC World Twenty20 in England on Wednesday, Nielsen said the time had come for international schedules to reflect the growing importance of the 20-over game by scheduling regular three-to-five game series, rather than

shoehorning one-off Twenty20 contests around Test and 50-over games. Since competing in the first ever 20-over international, against New Zealand in 2005, Australia have played 21 matches - six of them at the inaugural World Twenty20 in South Africa. That is the most of any team in world cricket, yet still well short of the 122 ODIs and 46 Tests the Australians have played over the same period; a reflection of the cautious attitude of administrators in introducing Twenty20

to international calendars. But with the World Twenty20 now overshadowing the Champions Trophy for recognition and importance, and the Indian Premier League spreading its tentacles across the cricketing spectrum, Nielsen insists the time has come for the 20-over game to command a more significant place on the international calendar.

cricket - and when you look at everything that's happening around the world, they should be then we have to get to a point where we're no longer just squeezing Twenty20 internationals into the schedule as exhibition matches," Nielsen told Cricinfo. "They've had a couple of bucks each way so far. We have a tournament like the World Twenty20, which is growing in importance, but for the rest of the cycle games are scheduled as one-offs, and used to get new spectators through the gates.

"I believe [Twenty20 cricket] will work at international level, but only if it is given more credibility. And you will only get that by scheduling series of three to five games, which will make it more than a promotion, and make a real competition out of it. The hardest part at the moment is trying to get your team and tactics right for a tournament as important as the World Twenty 20 when you only play a handful of Twenty20 internationals each year. A team's focus, if we're to be honest, is usually on

off Twenty 20 matches they're playing."

Nielsen's comments came on the same day Australia's coach Tim Cricket Australia announced its home schedule for the 2009-10 season - which will feature only three Twenty20s against West Indies and Pakistan - and just hours before the team departed for England ahead of the World

The Australians were soundly defeated by India in the semifinal of the inaugural World Twenty20; a result that played a sizeable role in the format's evolution. India's subsequent victory over Pakistan in the final was met with overwhelming excitement by Indian supporters - the victory parade through the streets of Mumbai attracted in excess of a million wellwishers - and prompted a once reluctant BCCI to embrace the 20-over game and set the wheels in motion for the formation of the IPL.

\ In the subsequent two years, Twenty20 cricket has expanded exponentially at domestic level, and developed specific tactics and skill-sets. Indeed, Nielsen concedes the Australians were largely unaware as to how to approach the 2007 World Twenty20 in South Africa; a fact he believes will not repeat itself in

England next month. "Twenty-over cricket had really only been around a couple of years then, and I think everyone was still trying to work out the best way to approach it," he said. "There was no mention of the IPL back then. You look at Indiathey rested a lot of their important players and played youngsters in South Africa ... but now "If they're fair dinkum about Twenty20 it's more accepted that you play your best

players. Tactics have come a long way, too. "At the moment, the World Twenty20 is really the only way to gauge teams' 20-over form. The other games are usually one-offs, and if you're on the other side of the world, it can be a costly exercise bringing the players you want over. We flew two or three players over to South Africa specifically because we had two Twenty20s there, but with only one in the UAE [against Pakistan], we stayed with the same squad from the ODI series."

Nielsen has already sought out Brad Hodge for insights into the tactics and methodologies employed at this year's 2009 IPL, and will canvas opinions from Andrew Symonds and Mike Young, the fielding coach, both of whom were involved with the triumphant Deccan franchise.

"It's great for us to have had someone like Mike inside the system, and we can definitely learn from that," Nielsen said. "We have one of the tougher draws at the World Twenty20 with the West Indies and Sri Lanka, and we will be looking for any advantage that might help us."

In an emergency meeting at the BFF House yesterday afternoon, a three-member committee was formed headed by BFF senior vice-president Abdul Salam Murshadi to probe into the incident.

BFF vice-president Manjoor Hossain Malu and member Harun-Ur-Rashid are the other members in the committee.

The committee will submit a report within seven days to

#### Victoria

**FROM PAGE 17** 

played to a 4-4 with Gaibandha Govindaganj Multipurpose High School.

Raja Suriyakumar Institute of Rajbari beat Azimuddin High School of Kishoreganj 3-2 while Shingra Dum Dum School & College, Natore split points with Netrakona High School playing to a goalless draw at the

### Brother's Union ground.

Bandarban

FROM PAGE 17 Chandpur 3-1 at the Bhasha Shaheed Salam Stadium in Feni, Probaha Sangsad of Noagaon beat Aleya Fashion Football Club of Bogra 3-1 at the Rangpur Stadium, Piyul Smriti Sangsad of Jhenidah beat Janani Sheba Sangha of Magura 4-1, Brother's Union Club of Pabna beat Ekok Sangha of Sirajganj 2-0.

Mohammedan Sporting Club of Comilla, Khulna Town Club and Shuktara Jubo Sangsad of Narayanganj drew their respective matches.

bar Ujjibon Sporting Club of Joypurhat and Kirton Khola got walkovers from Maral Sangha of Nilphamari and Bara Bari Boys Club of Patuakhali respectively.

## Aslam resigns | Tigers' tough

**FROM PAGE 17** appeared undeterred by the weather.

"We are adjusting well I think. We had two tough lengthy training sessions and the pitch and the conditions are becoming familiar. That's the whole idea behind arriving early in England. It was disappointing to lose because I thought we had a really good chance but we are more confident after this game," said Shakib who had struggled with a pelvic injury during the

last couple of months. New Zealand had been given a flying start by opener Martin Guptil who made 61 off 41 balls. Guptil preferred the

onside and hit three sixes. The Black Caps had raced to 59 without loss before Ashraful gambled by bowling the ninth over and had Neil Broom lbw off his fifth delivery. The spinners then tied the score down. Shakib was outstanding and had figures of 4-0-15-1 after

going for 7 in his first over. Two run outs also put pressure on the New Zealanders. Both were outstanding work from Nayeem Islam. First was a direct hit at the non-striker's end from point to send back number three Scott Styris and then a fast return from the deep to the 'keeper to leave Daniel Vettori short while attempting

Nayeem however, was guilty of bowling a wide off his first ball that went for four when he came to bowl in the 17th over. New Zealandgot 11 from it.

"That was crucial because they were not finding things easy. Still I believe we could have bowled better. We did not hit the right length often enough and there were some fumbles in the field. We had the game till the final over from (Syed) Rasel and the top-edged six McCullum hit would have been a catch any other day but

the wind took it over long off,' said vice captain Mashrafe.

New Zealand required 12 from the last six balls and singles came off the first three before McCullum's sixer off the fourth. Two were needed from the last delivery and McCullum (15 not out) scampered for the runs after playing the ball to the left of Mortaza at long off.

#### Murray

**FROM PAGE 17** 

Pavlyuchenkova, the 27th seed, who reached the last 32 with a 6-2, 7-6 (7/2) win over France's Julie Coin.

today. She is very young and maybe she respects me too much," said Safina. "It should be a great match against Pavlyuchenkova. She's having a great season. I've never played against her or

"I played a good match

practised with her so I'm looking forward to meeting her." Wednesday's win was Safina's 16th in 17 matches since she became world num-

ber one in April. Also progressing to the third round were Belarusian ninth seed Victoria Azarenka and Chinese 25th seed Li Na. Defending champion Ana

Ivanovic was later facing Thai veteran Tamarine Tanasugarn and third-seeded Venus Williams was due to meet Lucie Safarova of the Czech Republic. In the men's event, French seventh seed Gilles Simon,

Fernando Verdasco, the eighth-

seeded Spaniard, Chilean 12th

seed Fernando Gonzalez and

Croatian number 13 Marin

Cilic all progressed. France's Fabrice Santoro, playing his 20th and last Roland Garros, was beaten 6-3, 6-1, 3-6, 6-4 by Belgium's Christophe Rochus in a firstround match held over from Tuesday because of bad light.

### Back where

**FROM PAGE 17** improve both his and the

team's record.

Worryingly for tournament organisers, the attention of much of the British media, and World Twenty 20.

international one-day tournament and they head into this event with injury doubts over star performers Andrew Flintoff (knee) and Kevin Pietersen (Achilles).

international form of Ravi Bopara has shown England that there is life beyond "Freddie"

have repeatedly punched above their weight in international tournaments and could do so again during a tournament that will take place at three of English cricket's most historic venues -Lord's, the Oval and Trent Bridge.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh and Ireland, who have both enjoyed shock wins on the global stage in the past, will dream of further upsets although, with both Scotland and the Netherlands taking part, there is also the capacity for some hugely lopsided results too.

sponding women's tourna-

ment will run in parallel with the

main men's event, with both

finals taking place on the same

day at Lord's where, thanks in

part to Twenty20, permanent

floodlights are now a feature of the ground. way on June 5.

However, at least he is set to take part - which is more than England captain Andrew

Strauss. The opening batsman has opted out of the tournament because he thinks he isn't a good enough Twenty 20 player.

indeed home cricket fans, appears firmly fixed on the Ashes Test series at home to Australia which comes after the England, for all their experience, have never won a major

But the IPL and subsequent

and "KP" Sri Lanka and New Zealand

For the first time the corre-

The tournament gets under-

### the next Test or ODI series, and not on the one-

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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#### **CRYPTOQUIP**

CTDZ JNKYZLPGTPE DVXEL SYXXTKVPL GSVG

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Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN MANY MOLLUSKS ARE MAKING A LOUD RACKET ALL

AT ONCE, I WOULD SAY THAT'S CLAM-ORING. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: G equals T