

Qadir retreats on fixing comments

ANI, Lahore

Former Pakistan chief selector, Abdul Qadir has retracted from his earlier statement where he had alleged that some Pakistani players had contacts with Indian bookies.

Qadir said he was only worried of a possible match-fixing deal.

"I never took any names. I only voiced my suspicions like others were doing that the cricket board needed to hold a thorough inquiry into the reports that players might have had contacts with Indian bookmakers in Colombo," the Nation quoted Qadir, as saying.

Qadir's comment comes after he drew flak from the PCB chairman Ijaz Butt and coach Intikhab Alam for making unsubstantiated allegations.

Qadir said: "They can take me to the supreme court or high court. I am not scared. I said what everyone else was saying and I did not take any names."

Jimmy diffuses Justin jibes

AFP, London

England pace bowler James Anderson insists he isn't bothered by former Australia star Justin Langer's controversial comments.

In a dossier leaked to The Sunday Telegraph which was allegedly meant only for the eyes of Aussie coach Tim Nielsen, Langer described Anderson as "a bit of a pussy if he is worn down", adding that the England player and his international team-mates can be "flat and lazy" at times.

But Anderson believes Langer, who retired after the 2006-7 Ashes and now captains Somerset, is way off the mark with his remarks.

"I dare say people will wonder whether Langer's comments will spur me on a bit more, but I can say without any hesitation that I don't need anything more to get me up for the last Test," Anderson told The Daily Telegraph.

"The bottom line is that he doesn't even know me as a person and he last played Test cricket against me more than two-and-a-half years ago.

"A lot has happened to me since the last Ashes series and I'm now a completely different cricketer to the one he faced in Australia.

"The only comments about me as a person and as a cricketer that I take to heart are those that come from people who know me, and I'm not bothered by what Langer supposedly had to say."

Marcus not

FROM PAGE 17

of days," he said. "If it looks as though he can be selected in the squad then we will probably do that because the England side with Freddie playing in it at his best is a quality side, but we'll have to monitor it day by day and see how he performs in the nets, because he's got to do the workload required by the captain to justify his selection."

However, barring a dramatic volte face from the West Country, one player who will not enter into the selectors' discussions, is Trescothick, who this week confirmed to a local newspaper he did not intend to come out of his international retirement, despite being the leading run-scorer in first-class cricket this summer.

With a hint of regret, Miller said he would not attempt to change the player's mind.

"Marcus has many times said he's retired from international cricket, and until I hear contrary to that, he will not be a part of the selection process. He knows where he is, he's really comfortable and playing really, really well, but he's retired from Test cricket so he's not a part of our thoughts at this moment in time."

Shakib

FROM PAGE 17

match the cricketers took this opportunity to get over their tiredness.

"There was swimming, recovery and massage today. The boys stayed at the hotel and rested. They have been playing non-stop so this was a welcome break. Some of the boys have slight niggles and they had treatment," informed team operations manager Shafiqul Haque Hira.

The Tigers will return to practice today afternoon to prepare for the game on Friday which could very well be the series clinching one.

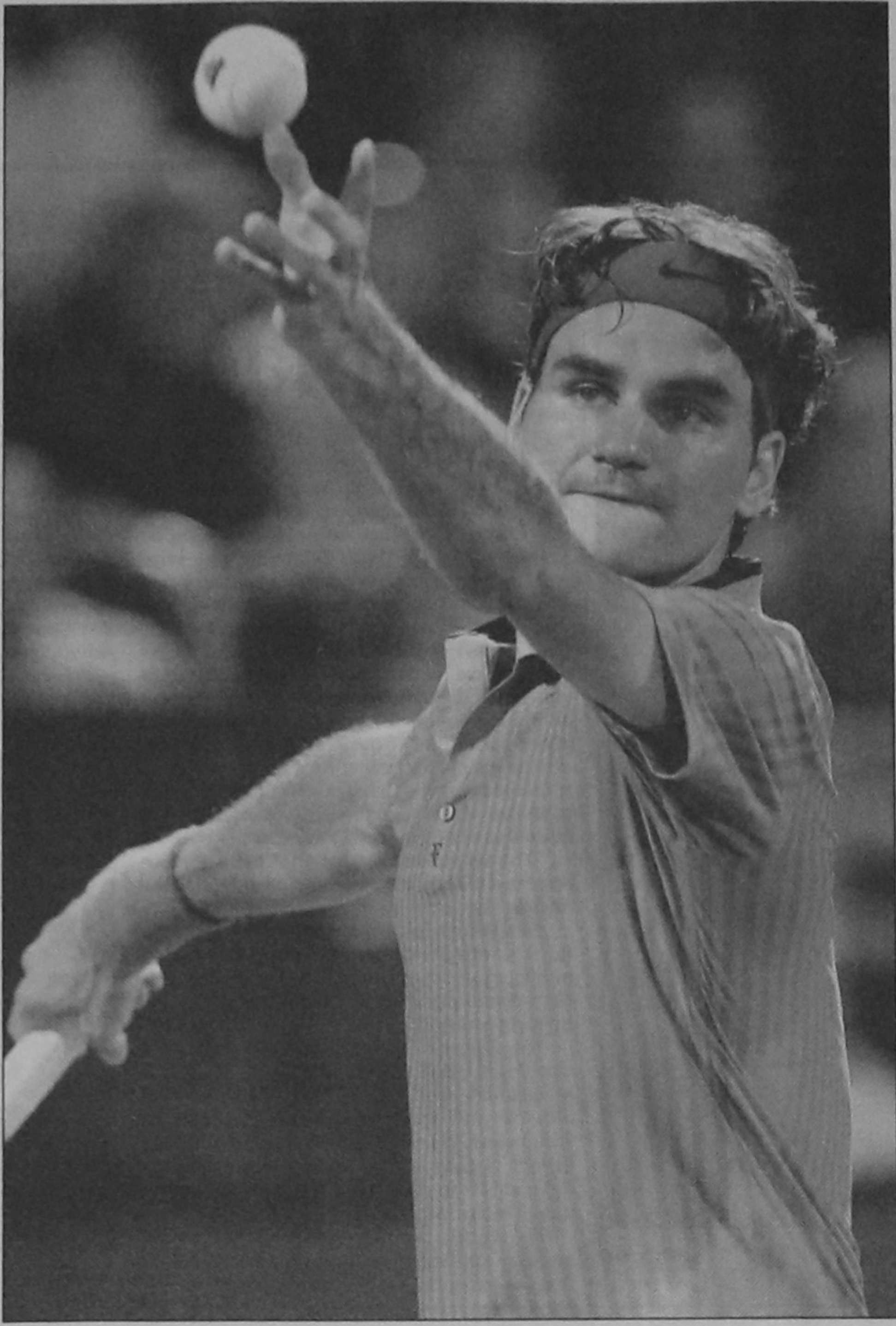


PHOTO: AFP

World No. 1 Roger Federer of Switzerland serves to Frederic Niemeyer of Canada during their Montreal Masters match in Montreal on Tuesday.

Federer progresses

Tennis

AFP, Montreal

World number one Roger Federer fought off a surprise showing from Canadian outsider Frederic Niemeyer to advance 7-6, 6-4 Tuesday at the ATP Montreal Masters.

In his first match since winning his record 15th Grand Slam title last month at Wimbledon, Federer outlasted the 487th-ranked Niemeyer, who is retiring at the end of the season.

"I'm very happy with my game. I reacted well in my first match back," said Federer. "I played the big points well. I'm very pleased.

Niemeyer, 33, saved three match points on his own serve, benefiting from a service winner and a pair of Swiss errors to hold for 4-5 and give his home Quebec crowd a thrill.

But top seed Federer, a new father of twin daughters born July 23, put an end to the dream a game later as he served it out, concluding with his 12th ace of the evening.

Federer, who skipped their past five four weeks, saved the only break point he faced in the 86-minute contest.

"There was a stadium full of Canadians cheering for Frederic but there were also a few for me," Federer said.

"I'm happy to be back after the long break. We played at a very high level. Frederic has a big serve and is tough."

Britain's Andy Murray began his summer hardcourt season with a 6-4, 6-2 victory over Frenchman Jeremy Chardy as the Scotsman took his first step towards a possible move to the world number two ranking.

Third-ranked Murray had a few niggles to iron out but was not at all dissatisfied with his showing in just over 90 minutes against the number 36 winner of last month's Stuttgart clay title.

"I shanked a few returns," admitted Murray.

"I'm hoping that will get better with a few matches. Overall, I'm pleased with the state of my game right now."

Serbia's Novak Djokovic, the 2007 Montreal champion, began his campaign over Canadian Peter Polansky 6-4, 7-6.

The world number four admitted to nerves. "I felt quite good, but not from the start," Djokovic said. "The first couple of games I was sweating a lot and I was quite nervous -- it was the first match after Wimbledon. It wasn't easy to get into the rhythm."

"But I managed to get my things together towards the end of the first set."

Murray is keen to bypass injury returnee Rafael Nadal this week if he can surpass the Spaniard in Montreal.

ATP calculations show that the Scot could take over the second spot from the Spaniard, whose tendinitis-plagued knees are now a constant worry.

"It's impossible not to think about it a little bit," confessed Murray. "But when I'm playing my match, it's the furthest thing from my mind. The only thing I was thinking was winning and nothing to do with rankings."

Eighth-seeded Russian Nikolay Davydenko, playing his first match on cement this summer, put out Frenchman Paul-Henri Mathieu 7-6, 7-6 to join Murray in the last 16.

In the first round, veteran Spaniard Juan Carlos Ferrero beat injured Lleyton Hewitt 6-1, 6-4 in the first round as the Australian was hampered by a muscle tear he suffered last week in Washington against Juan Del Potro.

"In the back of my mind, I didn't want to do any more damage to my leg, either, obviously before going into another Masters Series next week but more the US Open in a couple week's time," said Hewitt, like Ferrero a former number one.

Tommy Haas rallied past the huge serve of Ivo Karlovic, overcoming 19 aces in a 4-6, 7-6, 6-4 victory.

Gladiators emerge champs

SPORTS REPORTER

Bengal Gladiators recently emerged joint-champions in the 40th International 6's tournament in Malaysia after rain ruined the final against Pakistan Awan Club.

Bengal Gladiators, a section of Heritage Cricketers who also played the tournament and became plate champions after being ousted from the quarterfinals, reached the final winning all group matches.

Heritage Cricketers had earlier won a one-day match against Kuala Lumpur state cricket team before going down against Royal Malaysian Air Force Team.

National TT

SPORTS REPORTER

Mostafa and Soma clinched the men's and women's singles titles respectively in the National Lub 2nd Open Table Tennis Tournament that concluded at Engineers Institute on Tuesday. Mostafa defeated Manos while Soma routed Rumi.

Abahani clinched the women's team title beating Biman while Biman emerged champions in the men's team event. Zubair became champion in the U-16 Boy's singles while Wari Club clinched the U-16 Boy's team event title thrashing Lalbagh Table Tennis Academy. Ahmedul Hasan became champion in the engineer singles routing Arifur Rahman. Labour and employment, expatriates' welfare and overseas employment minister Khandker Musharraf Hossain distributed prizes among the winners.

Murali returns against Kiwis

AFP, Colombo

Rugby Union International Rugby Board (IRB) supremo Bernard Lapasset can see a dream come true here on Thursday if his sport is chosen by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) executive board as one of the two sports to be included in the 2016 Olympics.

The Executive Board will make a recommendation that will be voted on by the entire IOC membership in Copenhagen in October.

Rugby -- which will be in the sevens format -- is contesting the places with golf, squash, softball, baseball, rollersports and karate.

Rugby is seen as the clear favourite out of the seven candidates to secure one of the spots with golf emerging as a likely contender and softball as the dark horses to regain their place after being dropped for the 2012 Games in London.

Lapasset, who is seen as one of the strongest parts of the bid with his easy charm and clear message, told AFP back in June that it was globalising the sport that had really driven him.

"I have made it a priority of my mandate to make rugby a global sport," he said.

"We are effectively appealing to 205 countries worldwide. My strategy is to build on its appeal."

"For me it is to communicate the message 'Rugby reaching out'."

IRB chief executive Mike Miller said that the great thing

Safina rallies past Vinci

Tennis

AP, Mason

Dinara Safina got her game under control just in time. The top-ranked Safina scattered shots all over the court early in the match before rallying past unseeded Roberta Vinci 2-6, 7-5, 6-4 Tuesday to advance to the third round of the Cincinnati Open.

The tournament's top seed, who's in her 17th consecutive week at No. 1, came up with a service break with Vinci serving for the match in the second set. She had another break in the third to close out the match.

Safina, who suffered a cut on her left hand while trying to slice open a coconut last week in Los Angeles, had 48 unforced errors to Vinci's 28, many while Vinci was winning nine straight games.

"It was just a day when everything was going all over the place, except for the tennis court," said Safina, who met with her coach, Zeljko Krajan, after losing the first three games of the second set. "He's like, 'You realise you can put the ball inside (the lines). I said, 'Yes, that's what I'm realising.' He said, 'Don't do anything. Just go deep through the court and let her do something.' I guess she was not ready to beat me."

Third-seeded Venus Williams, making her Cincinnati debut, won 11 of the last 13 games and rolled past qualifier Olga Govortsova 6-2, 6-2 to move into the third round in the evening's only single match, which started 90 minutes late because of earlier rain delays.

Sixth-seeded Svetlana Kuznetsova had an even more difficult time, surviving two tiebreak-

ers and two rain delays to outlast Lucia Safarova 6-3, 6-7, 7-6 and move into the third round.

Agnieszka Radwanska, the 13th seed, had an easier time, advancing with a 6-2, 6-1 win over Al Sugiyama while 14th-seeded Flavia Pennetta moved on with a 6-2, 6-3 win over qualifier Ayumi Morita.

Earlier, qualifier Yanina Wickmayer upset Francesca Schiavone 6-3, 6-4.

The 56th-ranked Wickmayer became the third qualifier to reach the second round with her upset of the 26th-ranked Schiavone. Wickmayer believed playing the qualifier gave her an advantage.

"I think my advantage today was I had a few matches in my legs already," said the 19-year-old Wickmayer, who plays doubles with Kim Clijsters.

Also Tuesday, unseeded Alona Bondarenko upset 10th-seeded Nadia Petrova 6-2, 6-3, and 15th-seeded Dominika Cibulkova fell to unseeded Shuai Peng 6-2, 6-1. Flavia Pennetta defeated qualifier Ayumi Morita 6-2, 6-3.

Agnes Szavay edged qualifier Urszula Radwanska 7-5, 7-5, and Sorana Cirstea eliminated wild-card Meghann Shaughnessy by the same score.

Daniela Hantuchova outlasted Sara Errani 3-6, 6-3, 6-1. Maria Jose Martina Sanchez also needed three sets to get past Vera Dushevina 6-4, 3-6, 6-3, while Alisa Kleybanova topped Aravane Rezaï 6-3, 6-3. Sybille Bammer beat Jie Zheng 6-2, 4-6, 6-2, and wild-card Maria Kirilenko defeated qualifier Yaroslava Shvedova 6-4, 6-1.

The 2-million-dollar Western and Southern Financial Group Women's Open was elevated this year from a Tier III event to a Premier Level tournament.

Rugby knocking on Olympic door

AFP, Berlin

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IRB chief executive Mike Miller said that the great thing

about sevens -- which will make its debut in the PanAm Games in 2011 -- was that it was highly competitive and unlike the 15s form of the game was more open in terms of potential medallists.

"Sevens is more competitive. Look at the men's World Cup in Dubai where there were four upsets in the quarterfinals, that is an example."

"Plus it looks great on television. It is fast, furious and exciting."

While rugby is seemingly in pole position, golf is not seen as such a sure bet with several keen fans of the sport hesitant about including it ahead of less widely publicised sports -- which to them is a core value of the Olympics.

Clark's place

FROM PAGE 17

and Nathan Hauritz has had a very important role to play, probably the first opportunity really to consider playing four quicks was at Headingley.

"Stuart Clark got the nod and he did a good job, but the other three bowled exceptionally well as well and took more wickets. So I think we go into the final Test with those three fast bowlers as our leading bowlers at the moment."

Australia's selections have generated much debate since the start of the Ashes series. The move to omit the reliable Clark appeared to haunt the tourists at Sophia Garden, Lord's and, to a lesser extent, Edgbaston, as Johnson and Siddie leaked runs at an alarming rate. The decision to replace Phillip Hughes with the relatively untried Shane Watson after the second Test also invited controversy, however Watson's three half-centuries at the top of the order have gone far to vindicating the move.

"I've got to say from a selection point of view I've been thrilled with the Ashes, I think it's gone particularly well," Hilditch said. "Every decision's been tough because we did have a strong squad we thought coming over from South Africa."

"We were disappointed in Cardiff. If we'd won in Cardiff, which we obviously should have, the whole series would have been very different, so we've taken a while to come back from that. The Oval will be a tough Test. We're going to have tough selections. Stuart Clark played well, Brett Lee's going to be fully fit and ready to go, so it's a good position to be in, but it's not going to be an easy decision."

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Afridi lifts

FROM PAGE 17

Kamran Akmal was bowled by Nuwan Kulasekara after attempting a big heave.

The other opener, Imran Nazir, cracked five fours and a six in his 40 off 28 balls to boost the total as Pakistan moved to 59-3 by the eighth over.

Teenager Umar Akmal, who hit a 20-ball 30, put on 66 for the fourth wicket with Afridi.

Abdul Razzaq and Misbahul Haq added a quickfire 33 as Pakistan plundered 47 runs in the last five overs to leave Sri Lanka facing a target of 87 runs an over.

Sri Lanka clinched the preceding Test series against Pakistan 2-0 and won three of the five one-day internationals.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: 172 for 5 in 20 overs (Nazir 40, Malik 14, Afridi 50, Akmal 30, Razzaq 25 not out; Tushara 2-37)

Bolt plans to strike again

Athletics

AFP, Berlin

It's hard to imagine bettering three Olympic gold medals and three world records but Jamaican Usain Bolt will be endeavouring to repeat the trick at the World Athletics Championships here.

The 22-year-old goes into the event nigh on invincible, though, with the caveat that he has not faced major rival Tyson Gay this year.

While Bolt enjoyed the Beijing Games Gay - who goes into the championships as the defending champion in the 100 metres, 200m and also the 4x100m relay - endured a miserable time failing even to make the 100m final.

Despite the American setting the fastest times this year in the 100m and 200m the Jamaican is confident he can see off his challenge.

"Personally, no disrespect to Tyson, but that (breaking the 100m record) is going to be a hard task for him," Bolt has said of the American.

Bolt though, who attracted criticism from IOC president Jacques Rogge last year for what he saw as showing a lack of respect for his fellow athletes with his showboating style,

does accept that at some point he will be beaten.

"I am ready for anything that comes my way. I am not invincible, I am not unbeatable. Other people will have a good day when I don't, but until then I'll keep winning," he said.

Bolt and his fellow Jamaican sprinters, who dominated the Olympics climaxed with a world record in the men's 4x100m relay, have come under a cloud with the recent revelations that five of their team-mates had tested positive for drugs, though, they were later cleared to run at the championships.

However, Bolt is adamant that it won't distract him from his target at the championships.

"Definitely it's sad to know there are still drugs (in the sport) but for me it doesn't really matter, as long as I'm clean I'm just going forward," he said.

"It's sad for the sport because the sport was getting on so well, I was trying to bring it back. This is probably a step backwards because people start questioning everybody, especially from Jamaica."

"For me it doesn't matter because I will be going out there, day after day, doing my best. I get tested all the time. It shows that people get tested

and they get caught if they are on drugs."

Jamaica will be looking to Bolt to lift the shadows of doubt hanging over their athletes and confirm that he really is the master of the sprinting world - not just a bolt out of the blue.

BCCI to do

FROM PAGE 17

On August 2, Shashank Manohar, the BCCI president, had said that "the clause with regards to whereabouts is unreasonable." He had added that disclosing whereabouts to a third party was not feasible for cricketers like Sachin Tendulkar who has Z-category security.

The board is also trying to find out whether any governmental agency can force them to include the "whereabouts" clause in the contracts the players sign with the board. To that end it has asked if that would constitute an "unreasonable" or "bad" contract if such a clause was "part of a contract between two contracting parties in India," a source revealed.

At the moment, the board's contract with players does not include any specifics on out-of-competition testing or similar protocols.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Totally dominate

4 Right on the map?

8 Liking a lot

12 Shooter ammo

13 Jubilation

14 Disposition

15 Where salmon go to spawn

17 Motivate

18 Gazing one

19 Chart format

21 "Guinness Book" suffix

22 Transmission to a space-craft

26 Rural buildings

29 "No seats"

30 Dress in

31 Supplemented, with "out"

32 Book-keeper (Abbr.)

33 -- gin fizz

34 Dead heat

35 Happiness

36 Public squabble

37 "You betcha!"

39 Spring mo.

40 Smoke-stack output

41 Shamelessly bold

45 Dixieland music

48 Entry on a team's schedule

50 Bassoon's cousin

51 Wine's aroma

52 Yank

53 Implementation

54 Active one

55 Early bird?

56 Down

1 Piece of work

2 Sobbed

3 Houston acronym

4 Exit

5 On the qui vive

6 Poseidon's realm

7 Deep-fried recipe

8 Urge

9 Neither mate

10 As well

11 Pec