

## Kirsten denies his 'Mantra'

AFP, Centurion

India coach Gary Kirsten on Friday said he was hurt by charges that he encouraged Indian cricketers to have sex to boost on-field performance.

"My family and I have been deeply offended and hurt by the many allegations that I encouraged the Indian players to engage in sexual activity before a match," Kirsten said, reading from a prepared statement.

"I would like to state that I have never, and I repeat never, encouraged or told the team or any player to engage in any form of sexual activity."

A leading Indian newspaper recently reported that the benefits of sex also feature in a secret document circulated among players by the coach and mental conditioning expert Paddy Upton.

"These allegations are absolutely not true and completely against my religious and moral beliefs," Kirsten said here.

"The leaked article was compiled by Mr Paddy Upton and provided information for the players on the relationship between sexual activity and sports performance."

"I never wrote the article and read it for the first time two days ago. It has never been and never will be part of team strategy."

"I have been deeply disturbed by these false allegations and wish to focus my attention on helping Team India have a successful Champions Trophy."

## Parnell repays skipper's faith

AFP, Johannesburg



Wayne Parnell repaid the faith shown in him by captain Graeme Smith with a five-wicket haul as South Africa defeated New Zealand to get their ICC Champions Trophy challenge back on track.

The 20-year-old who made his one-day international debut last January took three wickets against Sri Lanka in the opening match three days before the second most important ODI tournament after the World Cup.

But they came at enormous expense with 79 runs conceded in eight overs as the co-title favourites with Australia slumped to a surprise 55-run loss in a rain-shortened Centurion Park encounter.

As South African critics sharpened their knives and sought scapegoats, Smith rushed to the defence of the left-arm fast medium bowler from the southern city of Port Elizabeth.

"Wayne is still young and it is inevitable that he is going to have ups and downs at international level," said Smith of the 'baby' of the Proteas team who was a teenager just months ago.

If Sri Lanka was a down, New Zealand was an up with Parnell and 70-run middle-order batsman AB de Villiers sharing the individual glory after South Africa triumphed by five wickets with nearly nine overs to spare.

"I wish to thank my teammates for taking the catches. I was nervous against Sri Lanka and felt a lot more comfortable in the second

match," was the typical modest response of Parnell when quizzed about the five wickets.

Another wicket and the rising star they call 'Pigeon' would have equalled the Champions Trophy record of Sri Lankan Farveez Maharoof against the West Indies in the last Champions Trophy hosted by India three years ago.

His eight wickets from two games makes him the leading bowler so far in the 2009 edition with three more than teammate Dale Steyn while West Indian Gavin Tonge captured four against Pakistan.

Speedster Steyn and spinner Roelof van der Merwe took two wickets each and Johan Botha one and Smith hailed his attack after South Africa avoided the humiliation of an early exit.

"The bowlers had first go at it again today and set things up beautifully. They bowled with the intensity we have been looking for, they hit the right areas and they created a lot of pressure."

"It was a good clinical performance and that is something we have got used to at this level. It was a credit to them the way they bounced back," said Smith, referring to the 319 runs conceded against Sri Lanka.

New Zealand failed to answer the plea of captain Daniel Vettori for run-rich partnerships and were always struggling after being bowled out for 214 in 47.5 overs with Ross Taylor (72) the sole batsman to shine.

Following the cheap departure of Smith (7), Hashim Amla (38) and Jacques Kallis (36) steadied the Proteas and de Villiers struck nine boundaries in an unbeaten 70 as South Africa reached 217-5 in 41.1 overs.



England pacer Graham Onions leaps in jubilation after dismissing Sri Lanka's Sanath Jayasuriya in their Champions Trophy clash in Johannesburg yesterday.

## Kaneria's maiden hat-trick

AFP, London

Pakistan leg-spinner Danish Kaneria claimed the first hat-trick of his career on Thursday playing for English county side Essex against Derbyshire at Derby.

Greg Smith became the Pakistani player's 800th first-class victim when he was bowled behind his legs for six and Graham Wagg fell lbw as he tried to sweep his first ball.

Kaneria was mobbed by his teammates when Richard Kettleborough raised the finger after Jon Clare was pinned leg before as he pushed halfward.

At stumps, Derbyshire side had made 474 with Australian opener Chris Rogers making 222 before Essex reached 166-2.

## Dokic's father jailed

AFP, Belgrade

A Serbian court on Thursday jailed the father of tennis star Jelena Dokic for 15 months in a retrial for threatening to bomb the Australian embassy in Belgrade and other charges, his lawyer said.

Damir Dokic was jailed for 10 months for threatening several people, including Australian ambassador Claire Birgin, and another seven months for illegally possessing two bombs and other weapons, lawyer Bosiljka Djukic told AFP.

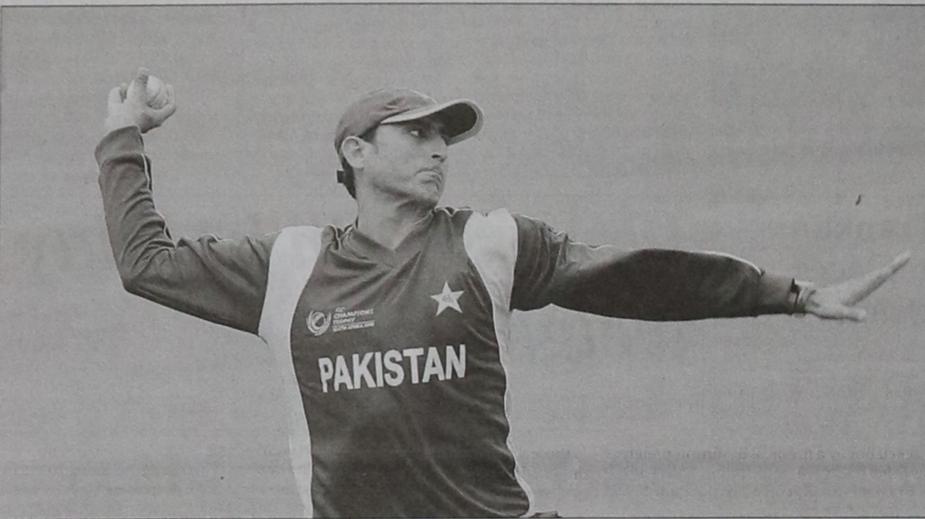
"The two sentences were joined under Serbian law, and he is to serve 15 months," she said, adding that Dokic would remain in detention until the sentence took effect.

## Franklin

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Franklin has taken 11 wickets at 21.90 and scored 224 runs at a strike-rate of 82.05. In the ongoing County Championship match, Franklin ended day two unbeaten on 104 after taking 5 for 30 to restrict Kent to 264.

New Zealand lost to South Africa by five wickets on Thursday.



Pakistan captain Younus Khan throws the ball during a training session at SuperSport Park in Centurion yesterday. Pakistan take on their arch-rivals India in their Champions Trophy clash today.

## Federer opts out of Tokyo, Shanghai

AFP, Paris

World number one Roger Federer has pulled out of next month's Japan Open and Shanghai Masters because of fatigue.

"After consultation with my team and doctors, I decided to take the difficult decision to withdraw from both tournaments so that I can give my body a chance to rest, rehabilitate and fully recover from a physically challenging year," the Swiss star said on his website rogerfederer.com.

"I am disappointed that I have to withdraw from Tokyo and Shanghai as they are two of my favourite cities in the world and the fans have been great to me over the years."

Federer, recently a father of twins, won the French Open and Wimbledon this season, as well as making the finals of both the Australian and US Opens, and also helped Switzerland retain their place in the World Group of the Davis Cup.

## Ajmal factor

FROM PAGE 17 but has since then confounded his opponents.

He befuddled the Australians with his big-turning doosras at Sharjah and Abu Dhabi and was the joint second highest wicket-taker in this year's World Twenty20 in England which Pakistan won.



## Did U Know?

1970 FIFA World Cup was held in Mexico. This was the first World Cup broadcast in colour and was shown across an unprecedented number of countries.

## Another Indo-Pak

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"We are headed that way and are very excited. We know we have to perform well as we continue the quest to be the best. We take pride in our consistency and we'd like to continue that," he had said.

Experienced Pakistan batsman Shoaib Malik said it would be "the match" of the tournament.

"It is the most-eagerly awaited match, both for the crowd and for the players because if you perform well and help your team win you become an instant hero," said Shoaib.

India (from): Mahendra Singh Dhoni (captain), Sachin Tendulkar, Gautam Gambhir, Rahul Dravid, Suresh Raina, Yusuf Pathan, Harbhajan Singh, Praveen Kumar, Ishant Sharma, Ashish Nehra, Rudra Pratap Singh, Amit Mishra, Dinesh Karthik, Abhishek Nayar.

Pakistan (from): Younus Khan (captain), Imran Nazir, Misbah-ul-Haq, Umar Akmal, Shoaib Malik, Shahid Afridi, Rana Naved-ul-Hasan, Fawad Alam, Mohammad Yousuf, Kamran Akmal, Umar Gul.

## Rhodes suggests Powerplay tweak

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

The reinvention of one-day cricket has been a hot topic of discussion over the past few months but Jonty Rhodes, the former South African player, suggests a simple tweak in Powerplay rules to revive interest in the format.

"All the Powerplay overs, including the one by the batting side, should be taken by the 31st over," Rhodes told the Hindu. "They could bring in this rule. This way you could have plenty of action between overs 20 and 30. And the last 20 overs are bound to be interesting in any case."

The ICC is considering a trial splitting of one-day matches into two innings of 25 overs for each team, that

## Players gain

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players on the first day of the training after the Eid vacation. It seemed to me that the players followed the charts I had given them before the break," said Maruf.

Maruf informed defender Wali Faisal and midfielder Enamul Haq Sharif have been suffering from fever and did not take part in the training.

However, Abahani manager Sattayjit Das Rupu was not as fortunate as Maruf though Abahani gave only five days break for the players.

"To be truthful, you can't expect hundred percent fitness from the players after a vacation like Eid or Puja and it must deteriorate. But I think it will take the players a few days to retain their fitness," said Rupu.

The Abahani manager also informed that Ghanaian duo Sherif Mohammed and Mohammed Awal will arrive in Dhaka on September 28 or 29 to strengthen their attack and midfield line-up. Defender Rajani Kanta Barman did not turn up yesterday, but he is expected to join the camp today.

"Now I have to give extra attention on the players to regain their fitness as the fitness level of the players seemed poor and I think I will be successful to bring them in a shape within five days," said Muktyoddha Sangsad coach Golam Sarwar Tipu.

Farshganj SC coach Abu Yousuf and Beanibazar SC coach Jasimuddin Ahmed Joshi were most frustrated with the players.

"It seems to me that the players always look for an escape from the training and have to be constantly pursued to keep up their regimen. It is really painful that the players have no interest in maintaining their fitness," said Yousuf adding that he yesterday briefed the players for half-an-hour on fitness.

Jasimuddin Ahmed Joshi, coach of Beanibazar, came hard on the club officials for their reluctance to see whether the players joined the camp on time.

Joshi said, "Ten out of the starting eleven have yet to join the camp till today (Friday) and fitness levels of those who joined the camp are zero and it is painful that I have to start from the beginning."

## Sri Lanka

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delivery of Anderson's spell after scoring just 2, whereupon Mahela Jayawardene was pinned lbw for 9 as he attempted an over-ambitious flick across the line.

From a precarious position at 4 for 20, Sri Lankan innings resurrected to 5 for 157, thanks to two well-made partnerships involving Samaraweera, Kandamby and Mathews in the middle-order that resuscitated their prospects of a defensible score.

## BCCI's new IMG deal

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

The contract dispute between the BCCI and IMG has been formally laid to rest at the Indian board's annual general meeting in Mumbai on Thursday. IMG will now be paid Rs 27 crore (5.5 million dollars) for managing the IPL for the remaining eight years of its ten-year deal, and Rs 33 crore (6.7 million dollars) for its work in 2009.

The old contract between the BCCI and IMG had effectively fallen through last month because of IMG's bill for services concerning the IPL 2009 in South Africa. N Srinivasan, the BCCI secretary, sent a termination letter to the company, which resulted in letters of protest from the franchisees and, eventually, the intervention of former BCCI president Sharad Pawar. The board's working committee subsequently authorised its president Shashank Manohar to act as a mediator and report back to the board at the AGM.

Announcing the new deal at the AGM, Manohar also had a word for the IPL franchisees. "There were reports about franchisees having written letters to the board," he said. "They have no right to interfere in the internal matters

## Sponsors pull plug on Renault

AFP, Singapore



Disgraced Formula One giants Renault suffered another devastating blow on Thursday when the team's main sponsors severed their contract with immediate effect in another twist to the Singapore GP race-fix scandal.

Dutch banking group ING said that their three-year deal will be terminated after Renault were handed a two-year suspended ban following former driver Nelson Piquet's claims that he had been ordered to deliberately crash at the 2008 Singapore race.

Former team principal Flavio Briatore, who quit the team in the aftermath of the crisis, was also handed a lifetime ban when the FIA's World Motor Sport Council met in Paris on Monday.

"ING announced today (Thursday) that in light of the verdict of the World Motor Sport Council of 21 September 2009 concerning the events that occurred at the 2008 Singapore Grand Prix, ING will

terminate the contract with Renault Formula 1 with immediate effect," said an ING statement.

"ING is deeply disappointed at this turn of events, especially in the context of an otherwise successful sponsorship."

"As announced on 16 February of this year, ING decided not to renew the three year sponsorship (2007-2009) contract with Renault F1 and to end its presence in Formula 1 after the 2009 season."

Fellow sponsor Mutua Madrilenia also announced they were ending their agreement with Renault, blaming the team's "substantial breach" of the sport's regulations.

Like ING, the Spanish company will remove its name and logos from the cars.

Meanwhile, Renault attempted to start drawing a line under the cheating affair by announcing they would withdraw their threat of legal action against Piquet and the driver's father Nelson Piquet senior, a former world champion.

Briatore had launched legal proceedings against the Piquets accusing them of blackmail.

## Clijsters to be more selective

AFP, Tensenderlo

US Open champion Kim Clijsters said Thursday she will play the four Grand Slams in 2010, as well as the Fed Cup and half a dozen more tournaments.

"I'm not going to base my programme on the world rankings because I want to concentrate on the Grand Slam tournaments," the Belgian said, adding that this would leave time for her baby girl and family life.

Fresh from her second Grand Slam victory in New York after two years in retirement, the 26-year-old will start the season at the Brisbane International from January 3 in preparation for the Australian Open.

She will follow that with Indian Wells, Miami, Madrid, Roland Garros, Wimbledon, Cincinnati, Montreal, the US Open, Beijing and the Masters in Doha, if she qualifies.

Belgium take on Poland in Group Two of the Fed Cup in February.

Clijsters won her only previous Grand Slam title in 2005 at Flushing Meadows after losing four Grand Slam finals.



(L-R) Russia's Dinara Safina, Japan's Ai Sugiyama, Ayumi Morita and America's Venus Williams pose during a press conference for the Toray Pan Pacific Open at Hotel Grand Pacific Le Daiba in Tokyo yesterday.