



Sri Lanka captain Kumar Sangakkara sweeps to fine-leg during their first Twenty20 international against India at the Vidarbha Cricket Association Stadium in Nagpur yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Gayle hopeful of Perth Test

ANI, Adelaide

West Indies cricket captain Chris Gayle and his team now have aspirations of drawing the Test series against Australia after giving the hosts a fight in Adelaide.

Gayle is confident the third Test Match is within his side's reach.

"We definitely can win in Perth," the Sydney Morning Herald quoted Gayle, as saying.

"I think they'll be a bit more happier than what happened in Brisbane, we still have one more game to go, we have to do well in that to say they have something to smile about. We need a couple of wins under our belt to take a bit of pressure off us," he added.

"We played good cricket for five days, it's unfortunate we couldn't come off with a win," Gayle said.

Lanka win

FROM PAGE 17

Did not bat: Jayasinghe, Pushpakumara, Kulasekara, Malinga, Fernando.

Fall of wickets: 1-43, 2-117, 3-126, 4-195, 5-215.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Nehra	4	0	52	1
Ishant	4	0	22	0
Dinda	3	0	34	1
Pathan	4	0	54	1
Ojha	2	0	27	0
Rohit	3	0	22	1

Mahmudul

FROM PAGE 17

(against Pakistan /U19) was washed out without a ball being bowled which effectively ended their hopes of making the final.

The Bangladesh U19 team were scheduled to return home last night.



Did U Know?

At age three Tiger Woods shot a 48 over nine holes at the Navy Golf Club in Cypress, California, and at age five, he appeared on the television show.



Justine Henin

(Belgium's former world No. 1 tennis star)

"I've never regretted my decision to stop playing but now I'm really excited about the prospect of starting a second career that probably won't look anything like the first, at least in my mind."

After winning the Women's Tennis Trophy on Sunday.

ICC may scrap home-and-away

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

New details of the proposed post-2012 Future Tours Programme have emerged, with David Morgan, the ICC president, stating the home-and-away component of the current model could be scrapped. All teams at present must play each other twice in Test and one-day series over a six-year cycle, but Morgan said the new FTP could reduce the mandatory requirement to one series.

Such a move would allow national boards greater flexibility in arranging bilateral "icon" series, and could lead to an over all reduction in scheduling depending on their manoeuvrings. Morgan was hopeful the relaxation of the home-and-away requirement would appease player unions, who have been outspoken in their criticism of the demands currently placed on elite cricketers.

"The process is similar but the results will be different," Morgan told Cricinfo of the draft FTP. "I can't elaborate, but at the moment it's a requirement that in any six-year cycle each full member has to play the other home and away in a minimum of two Tests and three one-day internationals. I believe there will be a relaxation of that. Perhaps

not in the number of games, but there's the possibility of instead having to play everybody home and away in a fixed cycle, you may either play them away or home.

"The FTP essentially is a basket of bilateral agreements between the ten full members with some consideration given to the more proficient associate countries like Ireland and the Netherlands. That set of bilateral arrangements is continuing. I firmly believe that it is very important to consult with the players. Where FICA (Federation of International Cricketers' Associations) is recognised, which is in the majority of countries, we are very happy to liaise and discuss things with Tim May and his team. I find them a responsible body."

FICA last month called on the ICC to scrap the FTP in its current format and enlist the services of independent consultants to devise a new scheduling system. In a letter addressed to the chief executives of cricket's ten full-voting countries, which has been obtained by Cricinfo, May, the union's chief executive, proposed an annual Test and one-day championship he believed would add context and attract renewed interest in the game.

The notion of a Test championship model has been supported by a number of cricketing bodies, Cricket

Australia and the Marylebone Cricket Club among them. FICA's proposal would see the top eight nations split into two four-team conferences, with semi-finals and finals to be played every three years. The fourth and final year of the proposed cycle would be referred to as an "icon year", and include the World Cup as well as high-profile bilateral series such as India-Pakistan and the Ashes.

"We believe that the model of bi lateral ad hoc series that have been cricket's structure for the past century (and again from 2012-2020) is fast becoming an outdated model, and will be unable to cater for the changing cricket landscape," May wrote. "It is unusual for FICA to request the ICC and its member boards to review a decision of the ICC board, however, we are of the firm opinion that there are serious flaws in the proposed 2012-2020 FTP that will severely threaten the primacy of international cricket in future years."

The likelihood of such a model being adopted appears remote, however, with chief executives gravitating toward an FTP similar to that currently in operation, with the exception of the home-and-away requirement. Following a two-day board meeting in Johannesburg in October, the ICC issued a release stating an in principle agreement had been reached on the draft FTP.

Benson to remain elite

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Mark Benson has moved to quash speculation of his impending retirement from the ICC's elite panel of umpires, and has issued a statement declaring that his withdrawal from the recently concluded second Test between Australia and West Indies in Adelaide was entirely due to health reasons.

Benson flew back to the UK after a solitary day of that match, having handed his on-field duties over to the TV umpire Asad Rauf, who had been at the centre of two controversial interventions involving Shivnarine Chanderpaul. The second, when Chanderpaul had made 62, resulted in Benson's original not-out decision being overturned, despite no clear evidence of an edge through to the keeper.

After the close of play, an agitated Benson was understood to have "ranted" to his colleagues in the umpires' room, and soon afterwards announced his intention to step down from his duties for the remainder of the match. However, after meeting with the umpires' chief, Vince van der Bijl, on Monday, Benson declared he was keen to continue in his role as an elite umpire.

"Following my withdrawal from the Adelaide Test and the media speculation about my future, I would like to clarify that I have not resigned as an elite panel umpire," read Benson's statement. "I had withdrawn after the first day's play as I felt that due to my general health, I was not up to the task and felt it was in the best interests of the game, the ICC and myself that I step down and hand over to my colleague on the elite panel, Asad Rauf."

"I have been in discussions

with the ICC since my return from Australia and we have agreed that I will undergo a series of medical assessments. We will then discuss my future and my position as an ICC elite umpire."

Benson, who captained Kent and played one Test for England in 1986, has a recent history of health problems, and was forced to sit out the one-day series between Australia and India in October due to high blood pressure and stomach problems. He insisted that it was this issue, rather than any concerns about the use of technology in umpiring, that prompted his decision.

"I would also like to state clearly that my withdrawal had nothing whatsoever to do with the umpire decision review system (UDRS). I remain a proponent of the use of technology as it helps the reduction of the obvious umpiring errors. The media speculation about the so-called disagreement in the umpires' room is unfounded and totally untrue."

ICC Chief Executive Haroon Lorgat said: "I sincerely hope that after Mark's clarification, all speculation will be put to rest and the focus will return to the Perth Test which is extremely crucial to Australia who needs to beat the West Indies to prevent dropping from its current third position to fourth in the ICC Test Championship table."

However, not everyone within the ICC is convinced of the reasons for Benson's behaviour. John Holder, the ICC umpires performance manager for Europe, told the Guardian: "Some people may feel that the [UDRS] process is humiliating and Benny may be one of those. Maybe he is a bit too sensitive to cope with it."

"The reality is that now umpiring is so much more under the microscope," said Holder, who stood in 11 Tests and 19 one-day internationals.

"Benny has had a few health problems even before he got on to the international panel. Maybe this job is not cut out for him."

"Imagine how it is: you have made a decision in good faith and you are having it overturned in front of millions of people worldwide. Some people might find that humiliating. Some umpires can give a decision, be told they have got it wrong, and get on with their lives. Others can't."

Nepal finish

FROM PAGE 17

"But, we will wait for the result of the Maldives-India match and I believe India will beat Maldives in a bid to avoid Bangladesh in the semifinals and if India can do that, I will be thrown in the last four," Thapa.

"We had a good experience from the tournament and it will help us in the future," said Yusuf Kargar.

He, however, said that the lack of preparation and facilities back at home let them down in all three matches.

TEAMS

AFGHANISTAN: Zohib Islam, Hashmatullah Barkezi, Mogaddar Gazizada, Mustafa Hadid (Hafizullah Gadami), Israfeel Kohistani, Saboor Khalili, Zakria Reza (Faisal Sakhizada), Ali Ahmad Yarzada, Masood Hashemi, Syed Bashir Azimi and Hamidullah Yusufzai.

NEPAL: Ju Manu Rai, Rabin Shrestha, Chetan Ghimire (Ranjit Shrestha), Raju Tamang, Bijay Gurung (Rakesh Shrestha), Bikash Malla, Biraj Maharjan, Rohit Chand, Sagar Thapa, Anil Gurung and Santosh Shahukhala (Nirajan Khadka). Yellow cards: Hashmatullah Barkezi (Afghanistan), Ranjit Shrestha (Nepal). Referee: Hla Tint (Myanmar)

Afridi laments IPL snub

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

All-rounder Shahid Afridi said Wednesday he was disappointed that Pakistani players could not take part in the lucrative Indian Premier League, calling for more support from across the border.

The 29-year-old was reacting to news that Pakistani players will miss the third edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) due to a delay in securing visas for the Twenty20 event in India.

"Pakistani players are the most sought-after in India and if they play there it would be the first step towards the revival of cricket between the two countries," Afridi told AFP.

IPL commissioner Lalit Modi ruled out Pakistani players' participation in the league after the deadline for completing all formalities -- including obtaining visas for the March 12-April 25 event -- elapsed on Monday.

"We are world champions of Twenty20 cricket and the whole world wants to see us play, including the Indian fans who ask

us about our participation," Afridi said.

Afridi starred in Pakistan's World Twenty20 win in England in June this year, grabbing man-of-the-match awards in the semi-final victory over South Africa and win over Sri Lanka in the final.

But he had failed to produce his destructive batting when he and other Pakistani cricketers took part in the IPL's inaugural season in April-May 2008, with Afridi playing for Deccan Chargers.

Pakistani players were then denied permission by Islamabad to play in the second edition earlier this year due to growing political tensions with India.

The Pakistan Cricket Board said last week that Islamabad had granted permission to the players to take part in the third season of the IPL, but the delay in securing Indian visas created an obstacle.

Five Pakistan cricketers -- Umar Gul, Sohail Tanvir, Abdul Razzaq, Misbah-ul Haq and Kamran Akmal -- have existing contracts with IPL franchises.

Seven other Pakistanis, including Afridi and Shoaib Akhtar, had contracts terminated by the respective franchises after the inaugural edition.

Afridi said security would not be a problem for Pakistani players in India.

"We have played in India in even worse circumstances," said Afridi, referring to a tour of India in 1999 when Hindu extremists made threats against Pakistani players.

"Cricket must go on, the whole world wants to see Pakistan and India play together," he added.

India stalled a series with Pakistan after the attacks in Mumbai last year, which New Delhi blamed on a Pakistan-based militant group.

The attacks also prompted New Delhi to refuse permission for the national team to play in Pakistan earlier this year.

Several countries have refused to tour Pakistan due to security fears amid a fierce and violent insurgency by Islamist militants.

The latest setback is one of many for Pakistan cricket, which was also dealt a severe blow when the Sri Lankan team bus was attacked in Lahore on March 3, killing eight people and injuring seven visiting players and their assistant coach.

The brazen attacks ended all hopes of Pakistan staging international cricket in the foreseeable future. A month later, the ICC stripped the country of its share of World Cup 2011 matches.

Waqar made Pak bowling coach

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan have appointed former captain and renowned paceman Waqar Younis as a bowling and fielding coach for their tour of Australia starting later this month, an official said Wednesday.

"Waqar has agreed to serve as fielding and bowling coach for the tour of Australia after we requested his services for the job," Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) spokesman Nadeem Sarwar told AFP.

Pakistan dropped about half a dozen catches in their first Test defeat against New Zealand at Dunedin last month. They also grassed three crucial catches in their series-levelling win at Wellington last week.

Pakistan play three Tests, five one-day internationals and a Twenty20 international on the tour of Australia, starting December 26 in Melbourne.

Waqar, who has settled in Australia and works as a television commentator, left the bowling coach job in 2007 after a dispute with the former PCB leadership. He also blamed then-captain Inzamam-ul-Haq for his ouster.

During an illustrious career, Waqar took 373 wickets in 87 Tests and 416 in 262 one-day internationals. He also led Pakistan in the 2003 World Cup before retiring the next year.

FIFA women's

FROM PAGE 17

said when asked why Thai Land were not travelling to Bangladesh for long.

BFF president Salahuddin, vice president Shawkat Ali Khan Jahangir and member Golam Rabbani Helal were present during the briefing.

Thanou won't get Jones gold

Athletics

AFP, London

Controversial Greek sprinter Katerina Thanou will not "inherit" drug cheat Marion Jones's 100m Olympic gold medal from the 2000 Sydney Games when officials meet this week, the BBC reported Tuesday.

American athlete Jones was stripped of the long jump and 100m gold medals she won nine years ago after admitting doping offences and Jones was sent to prison in the United States after lying to federal investigators.

Under International Olympic Committee (IOC) rules Thanou, who finished second behind Jones in Sydney, would now be expected to receive the gold medal.

However she faces a court case for allegedly lying to Greek police to avoid a drug

test at the 2004 Olympics in Athens.

No evidence has been presented to indicate Thanou was taking drugs when running against Jones in Sydney.

However suspicions arose after Thanou and Greek male sprinter Kostas Kenteris each missed a drugs test on the eve of the Athens Games, saying they'd been involved in a motorcycle accident on the way to the Olympic Village to undergo a doping examination.

It was the third time they'd failed to turn up for a test and led to a two-year ban from competition.

Subsequently, Thanou was barred from competing at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing for bringing athletics into disrepute.

The IOC executive board is meeting at its Lausanne headquarters on Wednesday and Thursday and it is expected Olympic chiefs will discuss the

re-allocation of Jones's medals from Sydney.

According to the BBC, there will now be a duplication of silver medals in the 100m, with third-placed finisher Tanya Lawrence of Jamaica being awarded a silver alongside Thanou and Lawrence's compatriot, Merlene Ottey, promoted from fourth place to a bronze medal.

In the 200m, Jones's gold is set to go to Pauline Davis-Thompson of the Bahamas with Sri Lanka's Susanthika Jayasinghe moving up into second and Jamaica's Beverly McDonald now in line for a podium finish.

Meanwhile in the long jump, Jones's bronze medal is due to be awarded to Russia's Tatyana Kotova.

Jones has also been stripped of her 4x400m relay gold medal and her 4x100m bronze but officials have still to decide whether these should be re-allocated.

P'naikos sack ten Cate

Football

AFP, Athens

Panathinaikos on Tuesday fired Dutch coach Henk ten Cate, with the club appointing Greece Under-21 manager Nikos Nioplias as his successor.

Ten Cate, who had six months left to run on his contract, was given his marching orders after talks with Panathinaikos president Nikos Pateras.

The former Chelsea assistant manager said in a statement: "It has been an honour for me to cooperate with Panathinaikos and the results support my work."

"I have laid the groundwork for this team. I respect the fact that some people may not be happy with the general picture,

but my assistants and I have given everything to succeed."

"The president's decision will not affect our relationship and the friendship we have developed. I would also like to thank all Panathinaikos fans for their support and wish the team to win the title."

Ten Cate, 55, failed to gain a league title last season and leaves with the club lying second, one point adrift of arch rivals Olympiakos, in the Greek first division.

Panathinaikos are still active in the Europa League and Greek Cup.

His overall record since joining in June 2008 stands at 45 victories, 17 draws and 13 losses.

Panathinaikos was ten Cate's first full managerial position.

He was assistant at Chelsea under Avram Grant in 2007/2008 and at Barcelona under Frank Rijkaard in 2005/2006 when the Catalan giants won the Champions League and La Liga.

He also served as manager of Ajax in 2007.

Ten Cate's replacement, Nioplias, issued an ambitious statement of intent, declaring: "My aim is to achieve with the team as a coach what I have achieved as a player - win titles."

The 45-year-old leaves the Greece Under-21 squad on top of the European Championship group. In 2007 he led the Under-19 team to the final of its own European Championship.

Nioplias' assistant will be former Panathinaikos striker Krzysztof Warzycha.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

40 Assess-

2 Check

23 Part of

1 Reverie

3 Staff

UCLA

6 With a

42 Cornfield

at the

24 Whatever

sharp

noise

Pole

amount

44 Makes up

4 Hearty

25 Without a

one's

quaff

— (broke)

12 Rice-and-

mind

26 1977 Best

recipe

46 Picture of

health?

Picture

nominee

13 "Some

Like It

50 Kam-

pala's

28 Host's

Hot" star

land

bane

14 Stand for

a hot dish

52 Chant

7 Raccoon

relative

30 Yoko of

music

15 Building

54 Having

8 Squid

31 Id

16 Hathaway

depth

squirt

counter-

part

9 It can be

boring

33 Geneti-

cist's

abbr.

17 Jog

55 Fortune-

telling

34 Command

to Fido

19 Journey

segment

56 Gallery

stands

11 Safe-

cracker