

SL apologise to India



AFP, Dambulla

Sri Lanka Cricket on Tuesday apologised to India after Virender Sehwag was denied a one-day century due to what the batsman said was a deliberate no-ball.

Sehwag was stranded on 99 not out as India raced to a six-wicket win in a tri-series match on Monday, which ended amid controversy over whether Sri Lanka had played in the spirit of the game.

India needed five runs to win and Sehwag just one more to complete his 13th hundred when off-spinner Suraj Randiv began the 35th over. His first ball went for four byes, levelling the scores.

Sehwag then smashed Randiv for a six but the delivery was declared a no-ball, meaning India had surpassed Sri Lanka's total of 170 without any runs being added to the batsman's score.

Television replays showed Randiv overstepped by a long way, indicating he may have deliberately bowled the no-ball to deny Sehwag a century.

Indian team manager Ranjib Biswal said Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) secretary Nishantha

Ranatunga had called him on Tuesday to apologise for the incident that threatened to spoil relations between the two teams.

"Nishantha rang to apologise on behalf of their board for the Sehwag incident," Biswal told reporters.

"He agreed the incident was not in the spirit of the game. Since the secretary himself has called us, we are treating this matter as closed."

The SLC also ordered a probe over whether the no-ball was deliberate or if any player had asked him Randiv to do it.

Sehwag wrote on his Twitter account that Randiv had apologised to him.

"I don't need to see replays, it was a deliberate no-ball," said Sehwag. "They did it because no team want to have a hundred scored against them."

The incident was slammed by the Indian media with most newspapers calling it "unsporting" and "against the spirit of the game."

SLC media manager Brian Thomas told AFP that team manager Anura Tennekoon had been asked to conduct an "immediate internal inquiry" after which appropriate action would be taken.

Sehwag reminded reporters of a similar tactic employed by Sri Lanka last year

when fast bowler Lasith Malinga conceded five wides to end a one-day match, leaving Indian star batsman Sachin Tendulkar on 96.

Sri Lankan captain Kumar Sangakkara said he was unaware if anyone had asked Randiv to bowl the no-ball, but admitted the incident -- and the rules of the game -- denied Sehwag a deserved century.

"I think if a batsman scores runs off a no-ball in such a situation, it should count for the batsman," he said. "The way Viru (Sehwag) batted, he deserved to get a hundred."

"I hope it was not deliberate. That's not the way I would like to play cricket. If that was intentional, it has got no place on the field of cricket."

"Knowing Suraj, he is a really nice guy. I have no doubt that it was not intentional. But if there has been some talk about it on the field, or maybe a bit of coaxing, I will have to address that very, very strongly in the dressing room."

Randiv, 25, has played two Tests and 16 one-dayers since his debut in December last year.

India play Sri Lanka in the return league match on August 22. New Zealand are the third team in the series.



PHOTO: AFP

Pakistan's Mohammad Yousuf catches the ball during a training session at the Brit Oval in south London yesterday. They will take on England in the third Test from today.

Roddick, Dent progress

INTERNET

Returning Andy Roddick and Taylor Dent came through their opening matches on a good day for American players at the Cincinnati Masters.

Roddick needed three sets to beat world number 46 Sergiy Stakhovsky 6-4, 6-7, 6-1 while Dent upset Feliciano Lopez to advance to the second round.

Roddick, who has struggled for form and fitness in recent weeks, produced some powerful serves but had to stay alert against an opponent who played some enterprising if erratic tennis.

The Ukrainian came out on top in the tie-break at the end of a very tight second set but Roddick broke early in the third to take a firm grip on the match.

"It was almost a blessing in disguise that I got to play the third set, because that's the best I've played in a couple months," said Roddick, who was also pleased to cope with the physical demands of a three-setter lasting two hours, 15 minutes.

"I lost the second set, but I came right back and I was able to get back on top. So I thought I did a good job of that."

Dent, who last won an ATP tournament in 2003, beat Spaniard Lopez 6-3, 6-2 in perfect conditions on Centre Court to set up a second-round clash with world number one Rafa Nadal.

Switzerland's Stanislas Wawrinka comfortably defeated Spaniard Nicolas Almagro 6-3, 6-3 and will play the winner of the all-French match between Michael Llodra and Julien Benneteau.

Sam Querrey completed a good day for the United States by beating German Philipp Petzschner 6-1, 6-4.

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NSC refutes

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the weightlifters and they will go back to their own venue in a couple of days because the venue adjacent to the swimming pool is being prepared with more facilities such as air conditioners," said NSC director (administration) Sheikh Motahar Hossain.

Hossain also claimed that the weightlifters misguided journalists over the issue of practicing in the open place because the NSC, in consultation with BOA vice president Mizanur Rahman Manu, had taken the decision to send back the athletes to their original place.

"The NSC conference room was allocated temporarily during the SA Games as the room holds meeting of different federations from time to time," Hossain said. "The weightlifters turned their old practice venue a kitchen-cum dining room without having any permission from the NSC authorities."

His claims seemed justified when yesterday afternoon this reporter visited the venue. Three unidentified persons, who claimed themselves to be employees of the federation, were seen relaxing on three separate beds beside a long dining table with a capacity of eight chairs while weightlifters yesterday faced resistance from wrestlers in gymnasium who claimed that their place was allotted to the weightlifters instead.

Cricket Pak-bound?

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan's cricket chief on Tuesday welcomed an announcement of a possible World XI tour to his country, saying he hoped it would revive international cricket in the insurgency-hit nation.

"The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) welcomes the announcement by Giles Clarke of the intention to send an ICC World XI to play in Pakistan," a PCB statement quoted its chairman, Ijaz Butt, as saying.

International cricket came to abrupt end in Pakistan in March last year, after a terror attack on the touring Sri Lankan team in Lahore, leading to huge financial losses for the PCB.

Writing in the September issue The Wisden Cricketer, Clarke, the chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board, called for a return of international cricket to Pakistan and said a World XI would tour there "in due course."

Butt said such tour would go a long way towards reviving international cricket in Pakistan.

"I am very grateful to Clarke, who is a dear friend of Pakistan, for pursuing our case and working tirelessly in bringing international cricket back to Pakistan," Butt said.

After the Lahore attack, in which eight people were killed and which wounded eight members of the Sri Lanka squad, the

International Cricket Council (ICC) stripped Pakistan of its share of hosting matches in the 2011 World Cup.

The attack also led to the cancellation of international tours to Pakistan but the ICC formed a special task force, headed by Clarke, to find ways of reviving them.

"World cricket must keep giving Pakistan cricket the chance to fund itself and move forward, to do something for the spectator in Pakistan," Clarke wrote in The Wisden Cricketer published Tuesday.

"The security challenges are enormous but we cannot allow the terrorists to win. They must lose by an innings -- repeatedly. So world cricket must go back and play in Pakistan."

"I do not think it will be possible for individual national teams to tour yet. But with determination and courage, an ICC World XI in due course will go and play against Pakistan in her great cities and there will be a marvellous atmosphere."

Pakistan, which is currently touring England, is due to play two Tests, two Twenty20 and five one-days against South Africa in October-November in the United Arab Emirates.

Ehshan Mani, a former ICC president and adviser to the PCB, also welcomed the prospect of a World XI tour to Pakistan, telling AFP: "I hope this World XI tour happens sooner than later."

Pakistan or Punjab?

FROM PAGE 17

By Wahab Riaz.

The 25-year-old uncapped left-arm fast-medium bowler was a highly controversial selection for the tour after only taking 14 wickets in Pakistan's domestic Quid-e-Azam Trophy while several bowlers who took more than 40 wickets each were not chosen.

But opening batsman Imran Farhat said a largely fledgling side coached by former Pakistan fast bowler Waqar Younis were aware of their responsibilities.

"This is a time to be very honest -- the criticism has been going round and now we have to repay our coaches and our country as well. We are looking to win this match."

By contrast, England are set to field an unchanged team for the third Test in a row, with the only major concern the form of Alastair Cook. The opener has managed scores of just eight, 12, 17 and four so far this series.

Greg may become a selector

CRICINFO

Greg Chappell could go back to the future after being given an interview for the newly-created job on Australia's national selection panel.

Chappell, a former Test captain, was one of the men who installed Allan Border as leader in 1984, but he stood down in 1987-88 after becoming upset with the game's administration structure.

He is currently the head coach at the Centre of Excellence and his place on Cricket Australia's list has been confirmed to Cricinfo. While the new full-time role comes with a spot on the selection panel, it also includes being a national talent manager and working with the states. Chappell does part of that already in his post at the Academy and as the Australia A coach.

Andrew Hilditch, David Boon, Merv Hughes and Jamie Cox are the incumbents on the panel that will undergo a mild restructuring. Over the past two years the Test team has dropped from first to fourth on the rankings, and could go to fifth if England, who currently lead 2-0, cleansweep Pakistan in their four-match series.

The selection quartet works on a part-time basis, but Hilditch is not applying for the vacant job and said the redesign would not change his duties as chairman. "I look forward to having a full-time selector in the sense there are a lot of issues with workload management and our roster system and making sure we're covering all the cricket," Hilditch said earlier this month.

"[The new appointment] will have a role on the panel like any other selector, but a very important role in talent management and managing the state talent managers. It's a pretty big role straight away -- a massive role. I think it's a big development for Australian cricket and I'm very excited."

Chappell, 62, is due to be interviewed this week. He was appointed at the Centre of Excellence in 2008, a year after he finished an eventful term as India's coach.

Anelka banned

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Valentin, who was one of the few to emerge with his dignity intact at the finals having quit in tears in disgust the day they went on strike, said that he had discerned a genuine sense of remorse from the three players who had turned up.

"I sensed that the players are truthfully sorry, and been left damaged and mortified at what took place, they were conscious of a collective meltdown," said Valentin.

"I believe that now it is imperative we turn the page and move on."

"I believe that to a certain extent there has been a very good dialogue in there (at the commission) which lasted a relatively long time."

"As a lover of the French team, and as a supporter of the France team, I think that each player has the right to a second chance."

All three players left the hearing without commenting, Evra and Abidal climbing into cars with tinted windows while Toulalan made do with a simple old taxi.

Domenech, who the FFF are seeking to sack altogether from his contract with the National Technical Direction (DTN) without paying him any compensation for what is perceived to be behaviour unbecoming of a French national coach, exited the

building without being noticed.

He had earlier tried to avoid the massed media presence by running into the building.

Others to have given evidence included former FFF president Jean-Pierre Escalettes and Domenech's assistant coach and World Cup winning midfielder Alain Boghossian, now assistant to Domenech's replacement Laurent Blanc.

BFF resolves

FROM PAGE 17

"The president has also expressed his wish to scrap Bangladesh's international schedules if the clubs wants in a bid to continue the domestic league, but we have opposed it saying both the domestic and the international schedules should go simultaneously," said Amer.

Amer, however, said that they would sit together today to discuss the matter and let the federation know about the stance.

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YOUTH OLYMPICS

It's first for Liberians

AFP, Singapore

Excited Liberians Sima Weah and Mika-Jah Teah, who usually train in a river, experienced a swimming pool for the first time ever on Tuesday when they competed at the Youth Olympic Games.

The pair took part in the men's 50m freestyle heats and finished 24 seconds behind the fastest qualifiers.

Just being in Singapore was an achievement, having travelled on their first airplane to get here during a mammoth 12,000-kilometre (7,500-mile) trip that took them from Liberia to Ghana, then through Kenya and Dubai to Singapore.

"We swim in the open river," said Teah. "This is my first time in a pool."

The race was a first in many respects.

Liberia, wracked for years by civil war that ruined infrastructure and left the economy in tatters, has competed in 10 Summer Olympics but only in athletics and boxing.

Weah and Teah are the first athletes to represent their country internationally in swimming.

The 17-year-olds train in the Rookspring Valley River near Liberia's capital Monrovia, where they often have to deal with aquatic life such as crabs and kismet fish, which they catch as they swim.

Weah was impressed but not overawed when he first saw the facilities at the Singapore Sports School.

"I felt encouraged," he said. "I was not scared. There was no fear."

"I was hoping to win, but I am just happy that I came here with my friends."

Their coach Steven Weah, Sima's uncle, is a FINA-certified coach who first introduced his nephew to the sport.

"We don't even have a pool in Liberia," he said. "I am proud of them because this is their first appearance in international competition."

The Youth Olympics, which involve athletes from 14 to 18, are being held for the first time.

LAHORE ATTACK ON SRI LANKA TEAM

Report sent to ICC



AFP, Karachi

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has sent to the International Cricket Council (ICC) an official report on last year's terror attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore.

"The ICC received the Lahore incident report from the PCB on August 3," a spokesman for the council, cricket's world governing body, told AFP on Tuesday.

However, he declined to comment on the report, or disclose any of its findings, saying only that "it is a confidential document."

PCB chief Ijaz Butt earlier confirmed he had sent the report to the ICC only after he had received approval from the Punjab government to do so.

"As the Punjab government had sent a copy of the report to the PCB with the instruction to keep it confidential, we were not in a position to forward the report to the ICC," local media had quoted Butt as saying earlier.

The PCB was severely criticised by former players and officials for delaying sending the report to the ICC, which had requested a copy

of the document.

The 600-page report was compiled by Lahore High Court judge Shabbir Raza Rizvi, who was commissioned by the Punjab government to conduct an inquiry into the March 3 2009 attack on the Sri Lankan team.

Eight people were killed in the attack by gunmen near the entrance to Lahore's Gaddafi cricket stadium, as the Sri Lankan squad arrived for play on the third day of their second Test against Pakistan.

Seven members of the Sri Lankan squad and their assistant coach were wounded in the attack, for which no suspects have been charged.

The attack brought an abrupt end to international cricket tours of Pakistan, as well as the loss of its matches in next year's World Cup, which will now be played only in India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

Since the attack Pakistan has been forced to play its home series in United Arab Emirates, New Zealand and England.

Experts believe judge Rizvi's report will help the ICC to brief its other member countries about the reasons for the attack and to help open the way to a resumption of cricket in Pakistan.

Murray needs no coach



AFP, Glasgow

World number four Andy Murray admits he will play the US Open without a coach after a morale-boosting triumph in the ATP Rogers Cup.

Murray defeated Roger Federer 7-5, 7-5 in the final of the Toronto event on Sunday just 24 hours after beating world number one Rafael Nadal in the last four.

The victory clinched Murray's first ATP Tour title of 2010 and was a small measure of revenge for his loss against Federer in the Australian Open final in January.

It was also much-needed confirmation that Murray can survive on the tour without assistance after parting company with coach Miles Maclagan last month.

He has since reached two finals, losing to Sam Querrey in Los Angeles before his success in Canada.

Murray now takes part in the Cincinnati Masters before the US Open begins on August 30, and has no intention of looking for a new coach in the run-up to the Grand Slam in New York.

"I said at the start that I would like to have a coach, I think most players would like to have a coach," he told BBC Scotland.

"But I want to have the right person working with me and have the structure and set-up I would like. I'm not going to rush into anything."

"I'm sure after the US Open I will look hard at the type of person I would like to work with. But I can't see myself making any changes before the US Open."

Murray, who has now won seven of his 12 meetings against Federer, admitted he had enjoyed being on court more than in recent months as he successfully defended his title.

The 23-year-old Scot added: "I felt pretty free on the court this week. I was going for my shots and had a game plan that I stuck to and when I wasn't in tough positions I kept going for my shots."

"I felt a lot more comfortable -- I didn't feel I was on the defensive to much. You have to do that sometimes when you're playing against probably the two best tennis players of all time."

"But I was able to dictate a lot of points against Rafa and Roger, and that hasn't always been the case."

"The whole week was very good. I was a bit inconsistent at the start but I played some very good tennis before the quarterfinals and the last few matches will definitely give me confidence in the next few weeks."

"I'll try to play well in Cincinnati but if not then preparations have gone very well so far and I'll try to keep it going before the US Open."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	40 Alger's "before"	3 Twitter	24 LXXVI times
1 Scrooge's late partner	42 Eggs	4 Fabled beast	XXV
6 Narcotic	44 Writer Kingsley	5 Something monster-sized	25 "Eureka!"
12 Trick-taking game	46 Erstwhile Peruvian	6 Hasn't paid yet	26 Colombo's country
13 Deteriorate	50 Swiss city	7 Coral creator	28 Syrian city
14 Improve	52 Palette array	8 George's brother	30 Calendar abbr.
15 Walking on air	54 Acquire abundantly	9 Belt component	31 NOW goal
16 Ogler's look	56 Twisty-horned herd	10 Adolescent	33 -- jiffy
17 Relaxed	57 Fashion sense	11 Odds' partners	34 Minus (Abbr.)
19 Type measures		12 Conger or moray	39 Michelangelo statue
20 Decorate, in today's slang		13 Beaver's mom	41 Smooth
22 Standard		14 Farm fraction	42 Shrek, for one
24 More, to Manuel		15 Toss in	43 Osso buco base
27 Edsel, for one			45 "A home is..."
29 Capitol cap			47 Yuletide refrain
32 A-line designer			48 Saskatchewan tribe
35 Primary			49 Cleo's slayer
36 Baserunner's goal			51 Poetic contraction
37 "CSI" evidence			53 Make up your mind
38 Young chap			

Solution time: 27 mins.

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CRYPTOQUIP

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Q T C O T R , Y D T G P T N B F W B A T G ?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: A PAIR OF MALE SIBLINGS WHO ARE WORKING FOR THE VALET SERVICE CALL THEMSELVES PARKER BROTHERS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: B equals A