### SL to cash in on Ricky's absence

AFP, Melbourne

Sri Lanka will keep the heat on an Australia side that will be without their skipper Ricky Ponting for Wednesday's opening one-day international in Melbourne, captain Kumar Sangakkara said Tuesday.

The Sri Lankans received a significant boost ahead of the Melbourne Cricket Ground match when Ponting said he was withdrawing to attend his grandmother's funeral in Tasmania.

Sangakkara's team hold the whip hand going into the three-match ODI series after thrashing Australia by seven wickets in a Twenty20 match in Perth last Sunday. The wicketkeeper-batsman

warned that Sri Lanka must keep applying the pressure to the world's number oneranked one-day team. "A player of Ricky's calibre

not being in the side, he's a huge blow to anyone," Sangakkara told reporters. "He's one of the best bats-

men probably in the last two decades or so. "I'm not sure how it will affect the Australians, but for

us again it's a case of thinking

more about us and trying to keep a focus on the processes that we try and do setting the tone for the innings and getting our combinations right." Although Sri Lanka are using the Australian tour as a

buildup to next year's World Cup on the sub-continent, Sangakkara said his focus would be on trying to beat the home side. "The World Cup is there,

everyone knows when it is and this is a build-up for it," he Like Australia, Sri Lanka are

yet to decide their line-up for Wednesday's game, but Sangakkara confirmed Upul Tharanga and Tillakaratne Dilshan would open the batting.

#### Wessels thinks Gibbs is over

PTI, Johannesburg

Disclosures in Herschelle Gibbs' no-holds-barred autobiography titled 'To the Point', have brought the curtains down on the out-of-favour South Africa opener's career, feels former skipper Kepler

"This surely puts an end to any hopes he had of playing for South Africa again," Wessels

These are some serious allegations and making them doesn't help anybody. One can only wonder what his reasons are," Wessels, who is now South Africa's batting consultant, was quoted as saying by the Times.

Wessels said Gibbs could now expect some serious action from Cricket South Africa (CSA), with whom he is contracted until April next year.

CSA president Mtutulezi Nyoka was, however, guarded in his comments about Gibbs'

"I have only read what I have seen in the paper and, because I have not read the book, I cannot comment. I would prefer to read books that nurture the development of the youth, not books that focus on the bad," Nyoka told the daily: "CSA advocates transparency, as I do.

We have to, by the nature of transparency, take the good with the bad," Nyoka said.

The book, which contains stories ranging from Gibbs' sexual escapades, involving other South African players as well, to his fight against alcohol abuse, has created quite a stir in South African cricket

circles. In the tell-all book, Gibbs also accused senior players -skipper Graeme Smith, Mark Boucher, Jacques Kallis and A B de Villiers -- of being part of a "clique" which created divisions in the side.

#### Wali, Meshu

FROM PAGE 17 Striker Zahid Hasan Emily and winger Zahid Hossain, who missed the opening day's practice due to fever, joined the training yesterday, but were refrained from training. They watched from the sideline along with Meshu, Wali and Shahedul Alam, the latter is also suffering from tendon injury.

#### Inter-private FROM PAGE 17

ipating in the tournament.

meet. BFF general secretary Al Musabbir Sadi and tournament committee chairman Towfiquzzaman Chowdhury were present.

Atotal of ten teams are partic-

# Ntini bids bye

Cricket

CRICINFO

Makhaya Ntini, the South Africa fast bowler, has announced his retirement from international cricket but will continue representing domestic sides. Ntini will be given a farewell during the Twenty20 international between South Africa and India at the Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban on January 9, when he will make his final appearance for South Africa.

An emotional Ntini, fighting back tears, announced his decision at a press conference in Johannesburg on Tuesday. He reflected on his journey from being the first black African cricketer to play for South Africa in 1998 to becoming one of the nation's premier bowlers.

"It has been a wonderful journey for me to represent my country," Ntini said. "I have so many great memories, which I will carry with me for the rest of my life. My career is by no means over; it just means that internationally my time has come to hang up my boots. Domestic cricket is thriving at the moment, and I want to be a part of the set up, as a player, for as long as possible.

"It is also my dream to give back. The Makhaya Ntini Cricket Academy in Mdantsane is gathering momentum, and I am keen to put more energy into the project, and let it be a vehicle for change. I am currently in discussions with CSA about getting involved with their 'Tomorrow' campaign, and give back to its cricket

development programmes, which are the same structures I camethrough."

Ntini played 101 Tests for South Africa, the last of which was against England at Kingsmead in December

2009, and 173 ODIs. He finished as South Africa's second-highest Test wicket-taker, behind Shaun Pollock, with 390 wickets at 28.82 apiece, and third highest in ODIs with 266 wickets.



#### **FACTFILE**

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ODIs	17	3 4	17 24	1 199	42*	8.65	0	0	16	6	30
T20Is		9	3	1 9	5	4.50	0	0	2	0	1
BOWL	ING										
	M	1	В	R	Wkts	BBI	BBM	Av	e 4w	5w	10
Tests	101	190	20834	11242	390	7/37	13/132	28.8	2 19	18	4
ODIs	173	171	8687	6559	266	6/22	6/22	24.6	5 8	4	(
T20Is	9	9	168	252	6	2/22	2/22	42.0	0 0	0	(

# India aim to keep Test domination

### Cricket

AFP, Ahmedabad

India will look to extend their dominance of Test cricket when they take on a struggling New Zealand in a three-match series starting on Thursday.

The world number one Test side go into the contest on the back of a 2-0 defeat of Australia at home last month and look primed for another triumph in the traditional format of the game.

Daniel Vettori's Black Caps, who are languishing at number eight in the Test rankings, hope to recover from an embarrassing 4-0 oneday series loss to minnows Bangladesh.

"The Bangladesh tour was extremely disappointing," Vettori told reporters in Ahmedabad. "We will try to rectify that in India. It's a fresh start for us.

"It's Test cricket and we have new players here and they have not been affected by what happened in Bangladesh," said Vettori, who

will be playing his 100th Test for the Black Caps. "When you lose 4-0, no matter to whom, you should expect a lot of criticism. Hopefully, it can be a catalyst for us in improving all facets of

our game." The Indians have been on song, snatching a sensational one-wicket victory in the opening Test against Australia in Mohali and following it up with a seven-wicket win in Bangalore despite missing three key players.

The trio -- Venkatsai Laxman, Gautam Gambhir and Ishant Sharma -- are now back in the side, having recovered from their injuries in time for the showdown with the Kiwis.

Indian off-spinner Harbhajan Singh said the key for his team will be to guard against complacency and give their rivals the respect they deserve.

"It was a little shocking to see New Zealand go down to Bangladesh," said the 30-year-old, who has 368 wickets from 87 Tests.

"But we should not think that we can beat

New Zealand easily just because they lost to Bangladesh. We will have to stay focused. We are really looking forward to the challenge of playing New Zealand.

"If we play to our potential we can beat the Kiwis also.

New Zealand, worried by their slide in fortunes, have called up untested middle-order batsman Kane Williamson and fast bowler Hamish Bennett to the Test squad. Coach and selector Mark Greatbatch said

the pair deserved their step up to Test status after showing promise in Bangladesh, where Williamson scored his maiden one-day international century.

"Kane Williamson is an impressive young talent and his game continues to improve with his involvement in the national team," said the former New Zealand batsman.

"Bennett did everything asked of him on the recent tour of Bangladesh and offers the side a genuine pace option.

"We are here to win. As Dan said, we have some new players in and this is a great opportunity for all of them. We didn't play to our standards against Bangladesh but we have to move

on from there and do well against India." The second Test will be played in Hyderabad from November 12-16 and the third in Nagpur from November 20-24. The Tests will be followed by five one-day internationals from November 28.

**TEAMS** 

INDIA: Mahendra Singh Dhoni (captain), Virender Sehwag, Gautam Gambhir, Murali Vijay, Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar, Venkatsai Laxman, Suresh Raina, Cheteshwar Pujara, Harbhajan Singh, Pragyan Ojha, Amit Mishra, Zaheer Khan, Ishant Sharma, Shanthakumaran Sreesanth.

NEW ZEALAND: Daniel Vettori (captain), Brent Arnel, Hamish Bennett, Martin Guptill, Gareth Hopkins, Chris Martin, Brendon McCullum, Tim McIntosh, Andy McKay, Jeetan Patel, Jesse Ryder, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor, BJ Watling, KaneWilliamson.

## Mani blames 'PCB boss'

Cricket

AFP, Dubai

A former president of the International Cricket Council (ICC) blamed Pakistan cricket authorities for the state of the game in the country and denied the world governing body was picking on Pakistan.

"ICC is not against Pakistan, it's Pakistan Cricket Board [PCB] which is against their cricket and has not sorted out their problems, forcing the ICC to take the matters in its hands," Pakistani Ehsan Mani told AFP.

"The way PCB is being run, it is only to protect the position of one person," said Mani, ICC president 2003-2006, without specifically naming under fire PCB chair-

man Ijaz Butt. Pakistan's recent tour of England was marred by newspaper allegations of spotfixing during a Test at Lord's in August, leading to the ICC suspending three key players.

The ICC on Sunday turned down an appeal from Pakistan Test captain Salman plenty on its plate. Butt and bowler Mohammad Aamer against the suspension. The third accused,

The ICC has ordered Pakistan to implement measures to curb alleged corruption and other problems, act could result in sanctions.

Mohammad Asif, had with-

drawn his appeal.

No international teams have toured Pakistan since a militant attack on the Sri Lankan team's bus in March last year, meaning huge financial losses and fears that interest in the sport will start to wane among the youth.

"The PCB should have taken the lead and sorted those things out," Mani told AFP late Monday.

"It is because we are not capable of doing it that the ICC has said we will step in. I know some of the people on Asian Games at the stadium. the [ICC] committee and they seriously have Pakistan's Sarker also talked to track and cricket at heart, I've got no field athletes.

doubt about that," said Mani. Mani said the PCB had

"Domestic cricket, schools' cricket, clubs' cricket -- I hear there are quite a lot of issues in domestic cricket in Pakistan which needed to be addressed," he said. "You will always find that

the boards with the best systems, like Australia and warning failure to clean up its India, their teams will always do better because the team selection, the selection of the selectors, is a whole process. "At the moment our sys-

tem... it is only at the whim of one person. You will only get a board as good or bad as its chairman.

BNS renovation **FROM PAGE 17** During the visit to BNS, the sports minister also met with national football team, who have been preparing for the

#### **Butt unhappy** with ICC, PCB

PTI, Karachi

Pakistan's suspended Test captain Salman Butt is furious with not just the International Cricket Council (ICC) but also the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for the way the spotfixing case against him and the pace duo of Mohammad Asif and Mohammad Aamer is being handled as he feels they have been "declared guilty without any evidence".

Butt went on air on severa television channels shortly after returning from Dubai after attending the ICC appeal's tribunal hearing which rejected his appeal and that of his teammate, Muhammad Aamer against their suspensions. "I have no choice now but

to now plead my case like this.

Initially we didn't say anything because we didn't have any direct interaction with the ICC and the Pakistan Cricket Board was handling things on our behalf. Also we were bound by the code of conduct we had signed with the Pakistan board.

### Nat'l b'ball starts

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Police, Rangpur, Rajshahi, Chandpur and Chittagong won their respective group matches on the opening day of Citycell 24th National Basketball Championship at Dhanmondi Basketball Gymnasium yesterday.

109-34 defeat to Narayanganj, Rangpur beat Mymensingh 60-40, Rajshahi crushed Jessore 86-49, Chandpur overwhelmed Comilla 91-38 and Chittagong routed Kushtia 106-29.

Jahid Ahsan Rasel, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on youth and sports, declared the championship open while sponsors Citycell's chief executive officer Mehboob Chowdhury Bangladesh Basketball Federation president Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, and general secretary AK Sarkar were also others present at the opening.

#### Easy win **FROM PAGE 17**

made sure Khulna won in the 22nd over.

vital as Chittagong made it past the 100-mark. For Khulna, Robiul Islam picked up three wickets.

#### **BRIEF SCORES**

DHAKA: 170 all out in 46.4 overs (Mehrab 59, Rony 22; Arafat 2-29).

BARISAL: 136 all out in 46 overs (Arafat 34; Sharif 5-20). Result: Dhaka won by 34 runs. SYLHET: 94 all out in 34.3 overs (Saikat 27; Alauddin 3-

RAJSHAHI: 98-0 in 26.4 overs (Forhad 77 not out). Result: Rajshahi won by 10

wickets. CHITTAGONG: 121-8 in 23 overs (Faisal 45 not out; Robiul

3-23). KHULNA: 125-8 in 21.5 overs (Ziaur 24 not out: Mahmudul

Result: Khulna won by two

Police handed a massive

his unbeaten 24 off 19 balls

Faisal Hossain's 45 was

2-9).

wickets.

35 Neither

36 Dowel

37 Jack of

38 Wan

39 Owns

41 The Red

Black

43 Missive

50 Medley

51 Giving

46 County of

Ireland

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options

54 Artesian

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57 Relaxa-

tion

55 "Hail!"

**56** lds'

and the

"Hawaii

Five-0"

mate

**ACROSS** 

1 Hairless

5 Heidi's

height

room?

12 Pennsyl-

vania

port

15 Genius

month

date

18 French

Erik

winter

pair

21 Charlie

24 Wire

25 Gene-

28 Paper

33 —

alogy

chart

30 Peculiar

quantity

generis

34 "Old Mac-

Farm"

refrain

Donald's

Brown's

expletive

measure

19 Half a

composer

17 Mid-

13 Meadow

14 Colloquial

greeting

8 Bar

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

58 Color

e.g.

meas.

Reagan

26 Regret

Era,

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much

31 Homer's

tion

34 Other-

wise

40 Expiate

42 Essen

43 Earring

44 Director

45 Peruse

47 Jason's

ship

48 Castle

49 Gaelic

climber

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52 Wall

**53** Ball-

locale

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QDJA

expletive

32 Parched

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29 Staffer

**27** The

**59** Jab

DOWN

1 Honey

solo

3 Dryer

4 Want

5 Hearty

quaff

memento

6 Maui

7 Brief

pain

spasm

8 Tex-Mex

entree

alkalis

16 Afternoon

affair

11 Whip

Solution time: 21 mins.

CONFINED HOSE

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T E E N C O N F R E R E C R A G T W O I R I S

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9 Phantoms

10 Corrosive 38 Dormant

bunch

2 Carreras

buildup

# Aussies desperate to snap losing streak

## First ODI against SL today

Cricket

AFP, Melbourne

Skipper Ricky Ponting said it was time to end Australia's losing streak when the home side takes on Sri Lanka in the first of three one-day internationals in Melbourne on Wednesday.

The Australians are in a form slump ahead of the opening Brisbane Ashes Test against England on November 25, having lost their last five international games.

Sri Lanka thrashed Australia by seven wickets in the latest Twenty20 match in Perth on Sunday, which was Australia's first home defeat in eleven T20 matches.

The time for talking was over for the Australians, Ponting said on Tuesday.

"There's no sugar-coating anything, we know we have some work to do, and we haven't played one-day cricket for a little while," he said.

"There's no doubt it's always a different feel around the changerooms when you are winning games of cricket and we have to start that I'm sure that over the next few one-day off pretty soon, hopefully that's tomorrow."

But the Australians will have to negotiate a

much-needed win against Sri Lanka without Ponting. He said he will miss the first one-day international to attend a family funeral in his home

town of Launceston in Tasmania on the day of

the match. Michael Clarke will lead the Australian team in Ponting's absence in Wednesday's ODI. "I will be flying out tomorrow morning to

attend the funeral and then flying straight back to the ground tomorrow afternoon," Ponting told reporters.

"I wanted to be here yesterday and today to

maximise my time around the team and get my preparation right for the coming games."

Ponting said inclement weather meant Australia would wait until the morning of the match to finalise their lineup for the daynighter.

Tasmanian spinner Xavier Doherty is expected to make his one-day international

Ponting also backed struggling senior batsman Mike Hussey to regain form for the Ashes and backed him to stay in the one-day side. Hussey is high on a series of problems for

Australia ahead of the first Ashes Test after

making a golden duck and three in Western Australia's Sheffield Shield match at Adelaide Oval over the weekend. "Unfortunately for him he's missed out twice, but I've had a good chat to him today, he's very clear in his own mind about what he

needs to do and he feels he's on the right track," Ponting said. "His preparation has been good for every game that he's played -- class players like him generally find a way to get it done -- and games against Sri Lanka, you'll see him score

AUSTRALIA (from): Michael Clarke (captain),

Xavier Doherty, Brad Haddin, John Hastings,

#### some runs." **TEAMS**

Michael Hussey, Mitchell Johnson, Shaun Marsh, Clint McKay, Peter Siddle, Steven Smith, Mitchell Starc, Shane Watson, Cameron White. SRI LANKA (from): Kumar Sangakkara (captain), Dinesh Chandimal, Dilhara Fernando, Chamara Kapugedera, Lasith Malinga, Jeevan Mendis, Thisara Perera, Chamara Silva, Mahela Jayawardene, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Suraj Randiv, Nuwan Kulasekara, Angelo Mathews, Muttiah Muralidaran, Dammika Prasad, Upul Tharanga.

## Fans will have to wait

match while the percentage will be same for the 16,000-capacity Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong. For the opening ceremony at the 25,000-

capacity Bangabandhu National Stadium most of the tickets will be reserved for the invitees. "The tickets will be available either at an outlet or a bank in all 64 districts of the country, but there might be five to six outlets or bank

branches designated to sell the tickets in Dhaka.

Actually we are yet to decide about the timing

and sponsor," said Babu adding that

Moneygram, an international money transfer

company, stood a very good chance of getting the rights. "We are not in favour of giving all the tickets

online because few people have international credit cards," he added.

from June 1 through the World Cup's central organising committee and the respective boards of the three co-hosts -- Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka -- will sell the rest of the tickets.

Besides the opening match against India to be held on February 19, Bangladesh will take on Ireland on February 25 in Dhaka, West Indies on March 4 in Dhaka, England on March 11 in Chittagong and Netherlands on March 14 in Chittagong.

The two quarterfinals will take place in Dhaka on March 23 and March 25.

BCB has already fixed the rates for the galleries. **TICKET RATES** 

Eastern Gallery (Category D) USD 3.00 North Gallery (Category C) USD 6.00 South Gallery (Category C) USD 6.00 Club House (North-South) USD 10.00 International Gallery (North-South, Category



Guests inaugurate the Citycell 24th National Basketball Championship by releasing balloons during a function at the Dhanmondi Wooden Floor Gymnasium yesterday.

#### 12 20 Bullets, 15 16 22 Small combo 23 Prognosticators 25 Recipe

23 26 30 31 32 42 40 52 53

SMDDXQNGZKFH QKFGA

GCMM KP C PKGZ KF PBA JNX.

PEOPLE SAY HE'S JUST A FLASH IN JAPAN? Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals I

COCGBFKX SAGCJA GCNHBP KF

JKOA, DFA

CRYPTOQUIP

GDNMX

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A HONSHU NATIVE HAS VERY SHORT-LIVED SUCCESS, COULD