



West Indian fast bowler Andre Russel leaps in delight after dispatching England opener Matt Prior at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Chennai yesterday.

PHOTO:
AFP

Bagai wants exposure

AFP, Bangalore



Canada captain Ashish Bagai wants his side to be given more major fixtures after they ended their World Cup campaign with a battling display in defeat against champions Australia.

The non-Test nation rattled their celebrate opponents by racing to the fastest team fifty of the tournament off just 29 balls.

Teenage opener Hiral Patel struck a dashing half-century of his own by facing down pace trio Shaun Tait, Brett Lee and Mitchell Johnson.

However, a middle-order collapse saw Canada dismissed for 211 and Australia, thanks mainly to openers Shane Watson (94) and Brad Haddin (88), won by seven wickets with more than 15 overs to spare.

This may have been Canada's last World Cup, with the 2015 edition set to be reduced from 14 teams to 10 -- the same number as there are Test nations.

"It's pretty disappointing for us as players, for us as a nation that's trying to grow, for us as a nation that's put in a lot of hard work over the last four to six years," Bagai said.

"Whether it be the World Cup or not, what we are looking for is better competition consistently."

Canada have improved consistently throughout this edition.

"As you can see, teams are starting to come into their own, people are starting to get out of their shells," said the skipper.

"But it takes more than six games to do that so hopefully we can get a good schedule in the next four years," added Bagai, whose team beat fellow non-Test nation Kenya by five wickets for their only win of this tournament.

"There's a big jump from playing club cricket to playing Australia, and that gap needs to be bridged somehow, whether it be playing more in the off-season and having more international fixtures and games against 'A' sides."

Bagai, reflecting on the tournament, said: "The experience has definitely been a good one for us."

"Our bowlers have done a fantastic job, they've bowled at world-class level and another positive was a couple of young guys getting scores."

"Hopefully, we can use this experience to make Canada a lot stronger in the next three to five years."



Ricky awaits Pak challenge

AFP, Bangalore



Australia captain Ricky Ponting said he was looking forward to the champions being tested by Pakistan in their final group match of the World Cup.

Australia already through to the quarterfinals, and bidding for a fourth straight title, made it 34 games unbeaten at the World Cup with a seven-wicket thrashing of Canada on Wednesday to go top of Group A.

Now Ponting's men tackle a typically mercurial Pakistan in Colombo on Saturday.

"It's always a great challenge playing against Pakistan because, as everybody knows, you're just never really sure what they're going to turn up and do on the day," he said.

"They can be a very, very good side one day and, as we saw against New Zealand, they can be very, very ordinary the next. They have that sort of unpredictability about them."

"The last game they played in Colombo was against Sri Lanka and they upset them there so they'll know the conditions pretty well and, by the looks of things, they'll play the conditions there pretty well."

After restricting Canada to 211 on Wednesday, Australia raced to 212 for three with more than 15 overs to spare thanks to a first-wicket stand of 183 between Shane Watson (94) and Brad Haddin (88).

But non-Test nation Canada gave Pakistan and Australia's opponents in the knockout stages hope when after winning the toss, they plundered the fastest team fifty of the tournament, off just 29 balls.

Teenage opener Hiral Patel defied

Australia's pace trio of Shaun Tait, Brett Lee and Mitchell Johnson with a dashing 54, with his half-century coming off just 37 balls with three sixes and five fours.

Ponting, however, was happy with the smooth conclusion of the match.

"I guess it's probably not ideal that we haven't been pushed right to the wire with many of the games that we've played," said Ponting, whose side are now the only unbeaten team at this World Cup.

"But I'm pretty confident in the players that no matter who we play in this tournament from here on, we'll be hard to beat."

He did admit that Australia's new-ball bowling was a concern.

"Against better teams and deeper batting orders, we have to make sure we don't let teams get off to that sort of start," he said.

"If you look at someone like [In-

dia's Virender] Sehwag, he plays similar to the way that guy [Patel] played and if we let him get off to a start like that in a big game, it will be a lot harder to peg them back."

Ponting, who praised 19-year-old Patel for being "savage on us" and hitting "some amazing shots", lost his temper after taking a catch when, having seen Steven Smith nearly collide with him, he angrily threw the ball to the ground.

"We both actually called for it at exactly the same time, which was why there was some confusion around," Ponting explained.

"It wasn't a great reaction I guess. But it certainly wasn't designed to try to inspire the team or anything like that, or to make Steven look in any way in the wrong place or make him look silly."

"If it looked bad, then I apologise for it."

Shahzad's WC over

AFP, Chennai

England fast bowler Ajmal Shahzad has been ruled out of the remainder of the World Cup with a recurrence of a left hamstring injury, a team spokesman said.

Shahzad may only miss one match with England needing to beat the West Indies at the Chidambaram Stadium on Thursday to have any chance of qualifying for the quarterfinals.

Even victory may not be enough if other results don't go their way.

An England statement said Shahzad "will return to the UK for further assessment and added a possible replacement for the 25-year-old Yorkshire seamer will be "considered according to England's progress."

Trio's British trial May 20



AFP, London

Three Pakistan cricketers accused of spot-fixing in a Test match against England last year were on Thursday ordered to stand trial in a British court on May 20.

Former captain Salman Butt and fast bowlers Mohammad Asif and Mohammad Aamer appeared at City of Westminster Magistrates' Court for the first time since they were charged with conspiracy to cheat and conspiracy to obtain and accept corrupt payments.

District Judge Howard Riddle said the allegations against the players and their agent, Mazhar Majeed, were "very serious".

"On the face of it, there is clear evidence against all of you in varying degrees," he said.

The judge ordered all four men to report for trial at Southwark Crown Court in London.

The players, who all live in Pakistan, were granted unconditional bail, while the Britain-based Majeed was freed on condition he surrender his passport and does not apply for international travel documents.

The players and their agent were charged after being questioned by detectives over accusations in the News of the World newspaper that no-balls were deliberately bowled in the fourth Test match at Lord's last August.

Prosecutor Sally Walsh said all four men were accused of having "conspired together and with others unknown for £150,000 (\$240,000) as inducement or reward to bowl three no-balls at the fourth Test".

She told the court the three players were accused of bowling the three no-balls "for the purpose of enabling another to cheat at gambling".

The charges carry "the risk of imprisonment", she added. Prior knowledge of when no-balls will occur in an innings could be exploited by gamblers in what is known as spot-betting, which is hugely popular in South Asia.

The players were greeted by a scrum of photographers as they arrived at the court.

Dressed in suits and open-necked shirts, the four men spoke only to confirm their names as they appeared in the glass-fronted dock.

An International Cricket Council (ICC) anti-corruption tribunal has already banned the three players over the allegations.

Butt received a 10-year ban with five years suspended, Asif was barred for seven years with two suspended and 18-year-old Aamer was banned for five years.

Real stroll into quarters

AFP, Madrid



Real Madrid put their recent European woes behind them to reach the quarterfinals of the Champions League for the first time since 2004 with a comfortable 3-0 win over Lyon on Wednesday.

Real had crashed out at the last 16 stage of the Champions League for six successive seasons, but new coach Jose Mourinho brought an end to that jinx.

Goals from Marcelo, Lyon old boy Karim Benzema and Angel di Maria secured victory as Madrid progressed 4-1 on aggregate.

Brazilian full-back Marcelo scored his first Champions League goal on 37 minutes to break the deadlock, before Benzema netted his sixth goal of the competition on 65 minutes against his hometown club.

Argentine di Maria added a third on 76 minutes as Real took revenge on Lyon, who defeated them at this stage last season, and keep alive their hopes of a first Champions League title since 2002.

Mourinho, who won the trophy with Inter Milan at the Santiago Bernabeu last season, is looking to provide Real with their 10th European Cup and make history by becoming the first manager to win the Champions League with three different clubs.



PHOTO: AFP

Real Madrid striker Karim Benzema celebrates scoring the second goal against Olympique Lyonnais during their Champions League second round encounter at Bernabeu on Wednesday.

"We did what the manager wanted and went out to win the game," said Marcelo.

"This victory gives us a lot of confidence and we owed it to the Madrid fans. We are not thinking about who we could get in the next round. We will just wait for the draw and see."

Real welcomed back top scorer Cristiano Ronaldo from injury -- the Portuguese star having missed the last two league games with a thigh problem -- and the world's most expensive player was thrust into the starting line-up.

Lyon had never lost in their three Champions League trips to the Bernabeu but the French visi-

tors knew they would have to score in the Spanish capital after the 1-1 draw in the first leg.

Lyon welcomed back striker Lisandro Lopez and Brazilian captain Cris shrugged off a knock to start.

Ronaldo tried his luck with a long range free-kick early on but his effort sailed over the crossbar.

With four minutes gone Real almost scored but goalkeeper Hugo Lloris raced out to thwart German international Mesut Ozil, who had timed his run to perfection.

keeper Iker Casillas got down to palm away.

Real responded by upping their game and took the lead on 37 minutes thanks to a fine individual goal from Marcelo.

The Brazilian exchanged passes with Ronaldo before surging into the area, cutting back onto his left foot and firing in a shot that deflected off Lloris on its way in.

The relief was tangible and Benzema, in fine form with six goals in his last three league outings, was denied by Lloris four minutes later after latching onto a Marcelo cross.

Benzema had the ball in the net 60 seconds later with a fine header but was flagged offside.

Coach Claude Puel threw on striker Bafetimbi Gomis to give his side more firepower, but it was the hosts who looked the more dangerous, especially from set-pieces.

Benzema had a penalty appeal turned down on 63 minutes but shrugged off the disappointment to score three minutes later.

A defensive mix-up allowed Benzema a free run on goal and the Frenchman slotted home for his sixth goal in the competition this term.

Lyon sensed the game was up and winger di Maria went clean through on goal in the 76th minute before producing a neat chipped finish to complete the scoring.

SPORTS POLL
WEEKLY QUESTION
Which big team will miss out in the World Cup quarterfinals?
Visit the sports page of www.thedailystar.net to cast vote
Follow The Daily Star Sport on
twitter
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What to WATCH
ESPN
ICC Cricket World Cup
Ireland v Netherlands
Live from 10:00am
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 11:30pm
BTV/STAR Sports/STAR Cricket
ICC Cricket World Cup
Sri Lanka v New Zealand

DAY'S EVENT
Nat'l Cricket League
(Four-Day Match, Day-4)
Rajshahi v Barisal at Bogra
Chittagong v Khuna at Sylhet
Dhaka v Sylhet at Rajshahi
Pre-Olympic Qualifier
Bangladesh v India
Time: 4:30pm

BOMBAY SWEETS
To know it... You have to eat it !!
WHAT WAS THE FIRST NAME OF THE CRICKET WORLD CUP?
Potato Crackers
BOMBAY PRIS
SCRATCH AND WIN ATTRACTIVE BOMBAY CRICKET CARDS
For answer... see tomorrow's newspaper Yesterday's answer... Dennis Lillee