

Afridi files petition

 Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Suspended Pakistan cricket star Shahid Afridi yesterday filed a petition in court demanding that sanctions imposed on him by the Pakistan Cricket Board be overthrown and calling for justice.

A long running slanging match between Afridi and Pakistani managers has rocked the game, still reeling from the aftermath of a spot-fixing scandal which ended in lengthy bans on Salman Butt, Mohammad Asif and Mohammad Aamer.

"I have taken a plea that the show-cause notice served on me is illegal and the ban on me playing abroad should be lifted and I hope justice will be done," Afridi told AFP after filing the petition in the southern province Sindh.

"We have filed a petition in the Sindh High Court against the sanctions on our client Afridi and have appealed for a stay order against the punishments against him," his lawyer Mahmood Mandviwala told AFP.

Court officials said proceedings on Afridi's case began immediately under a two-member bench of chief justice Musheer Alam and Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi.

They swiftly ordered the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) to adjourn a disciplinary committee meeting, before which Afridi had been summoned to appear on Wednesday.

"The court has ordered the PCB to adjourn the June 8 meeting and asked PCB officials to appear on Thursday," said a court official.

Afridi took legal action after announcing his retirement from international cricket to protest against being replaced as one-day captain last month.

The PCB said Afridi breached the players' code of conduct by announcing his retirement and levelling allegations against the Board.

The PCB suspended his central contract, revoked all his no-objection certificates which would have allowed him to play in England and Sri Lanka and served him with a show-cause notice last week.

They also formed the three-man disciplinary committee before which Afridi was ordered to appear on Wednesday.

Afridi's petition was filed after Pakistan coach Waqar Younis and manager Intikhab Alam described him as "immature and unwilling to listen" in tour reports leaked to the media and published in the Dawn news-

paper on Tuesday.

"As captain I feel he is still very immature, has poor discipline, lacks game plan and is unwilling to listen to others' opinion or advice," wrote Waqar of the West Indies tour where Afridi led the team to a 3-2 win in May.

It was Afridi's public criticism of Waqar last month over "undue meddling" in team selection, which forced the PCB to serve him with a show-cause notice and then dump him as captain.

In his report, Waqar said coaching staff had failed to improve Afridi's behaviour, saying that "sometimes his volatile and immature nature have proved detrimental



Shahid Afridi leaves the Sindh High Court in Karachi yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

and led to unfortunate outcome of the game losses".

Waqar said Afridi created a fuss during the fourth and fifth one-day match on the West Indies tour.

"Afridi came into the meetings with a decisive mindset and was refusing to discuss the playing 11 options for the team and behaved very inappropriately and walked out of the meeting," wrote Waqar in his report.

"Afridi's attitude and unwillingness to sort out matters led to a very uncomfortable dressing room environment which affected the players' performance, resulting in the last two losses of the series."

Afridi's lawyer Mandviwala blamed the PCB for maligning his client by leaking the reports.

A million disappointed

AFP, London

More than half of the sports fans who applied for tickets to the 2012 Olympics have missed out, the BBC reported Tuesday.

An estimated 1.8 million people made 20 million bids for the 6.6 million tickets available, with 55 percent of applicants missing out completely, according to BBC London.

Unsuccessful applicants will be given priority when any unsold tickets go on sale, although tickets to many of the most sought-after events -- the opening and closing ceremonies and athletics finals -- are sold out.

"We understand people's disappointment, but those who have been unsuccessful in the first round will get first choice in the second round sales which will come later this month," a London 2012 spokesman said.

"Hundreds of thousands of great tickets are still available, everything from athletics to basketball, hockey and volleyball."

More than 50 percent of the 650 sessions available were heavily oversubscribed and triggered a computerised ballot.

Among those who missed out on Olympics tickets were London Mayor Boris Johnson, who confirmed last week his attempts to buy "quite a few" tickets had been unsuccessful.

"I am personally disappointed not to have got any tickets but I shall try again," he said.

Federer pulls out of Halle

AFP, Halle

Halle's ATP tournament suffered a huge blow on Monday when the main drawcard top seed and six-time Wimbledon champion Roger Federer pulled out.

The 30-year-old Swiss - who had been scheduled to face Australia's former world number one Lleyton Hewitt in a rematch of last year's final which the Aussie won - announced he did not want to risk aggravating his delicate groin ahead of Wimbledon later this month.

The 30-year-old - who was due to meet Australia's former world number one and defending champion Lleyton Hewitt in the second round - said he needed to rest after a gruelling campaign at the French Open, where he lost to Rafael Nadal in four sets in the final.

Meanwhile, Taiwan's Yen-Hsun Lu booked his place in the second round with a 7-6 (7/2), 6-3 win over Finland's Jarkko Nieminen on Monday.

Lu will play a German in the second round and faces either wild-card Dustin Brown or sixth-seed Florian Mayer.

Seventh-seed Alexandr Dolgoplov of the Ukraine is into the second round after he recovered from losing the first set tie-breaker to beat Holland's Robin Haase 6-7 (4/7), 6-4, 6-4.

Local favourite Philipp Kohlschreiber is also through after grinding out a 6-4, 3-6, 6-1 win over Cedrik-Marcel Stebe in just over two-hours.

Reds keep

FROM PAGE 16 goal in the current campaign for the diminutive striker who has found the back of the net regularly despite missing part of the season through injury. If Mithun has been a revelation amongst local strikers in terms of goal-scoring, there hasn't been any better in the trade than his strike partner James Saeed Moga. The gigantic Sudanese striker proved his worth again in the 53rd minute with his 16th goal of the campaign.

Moga cut back inside a defender from the left before slotting it past the goalie on to the far post to seal the match for visitors Muktiyoddha.

Sharma guides India

 Cricket

AFP, Port of Spain

Rohit Sharma led the way with an unbeaten 68, and Shikhar Dhawan scored 51 to propel India to a facile four-wicket victory over West Indies in the first One-day International on Monday.

Sharma struck three fours and one six from 75 balls, and Dhawan hit the same number of boundaries from 76 deliveries, as India, chasing 215 for victory, reached their target with 31 balls remaining.

Harbhajan Singh hit the winning runs with a six over deep square leg off West Indies captain Darren Sammy.

India take a 1-0 lead in the five-match series, which continues on Wednesday at the same venue.

"It was a pleasing victory for us," said India captain Suresh Raina.

"Our bowlers did a good job for us, and this was followed by Rohit and Shikhar.

"It was a bit shaky for us when we started our chase because the pitch was not all that good for free-scoring batting, but we rotated the strike very well, especially Rohit, and we got the job done very well."

India's spinners, led by Harbhajan, took their cue from Pakistan before them, and restricted West Indies to 214 for nine from their allocation of 50 overs.

Harbhajan collected three for 32 from 10 overs, and led the five spin bowling options employed by the Indians, collecting five wickets, and conceding 125 runs from a collective 31 overs.

Ramnaresh Sarwan hit the top score of 56 from 94 deliveries, and Marlon Samuels made 55 from 75 balls in a third wicket stand of 82 that gave the innings some backbone, after West Indies, electing to bat, went into a tailspin on 59 for three in the 19th over.

Similarly, India were wobbling on 61 for three in the 16th over, after their batsmen found scoring difficult on the slow Queen's Park Oval pitch.

Dhawan added 43 with Sharma for the fourth wicket before he was caught at deep mid-wicket off leg-spinner Anthony Martin in the 26th over.

But it was a stand of 80 between Sharma and Raina that put India firmly on track for victory.

Raina, whose 43 from 50 balls included four boundaries, was caught at long-on off Martin in the 41st over, and Yusuf Pathan made 10 then gave Ravi Rampaul a return catch before Harbhajan took India over the finish line.

"We bowled well, but we did not score enough runs to be able to keep the pressure on them," said Sammy.

Earlier, Praveen Kumar struck an early blow, when he had Lendl Simmons caught at mid-off for six in the seventh over, and Munaf Patel had left-hander Darren Bravo caught at slip for four in the next over, leaving West Indies 28 for two.

Harbhajan set West Indies back further, when Kirk Edwards was caught at slip off a top-edged pulled whip.

India met defiance, when Samuels joined Sarwan, and



India batsman Rohit Sharma plays the ball behind square on the off side during his unbeaten 68 in the first ODI against West Indies at the Queen's Park Oval in Port of Spain yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

they revived West Indies, but the spin bowling remained a danger, and the hosts batsmen were never in full control.

Patel made the breakthrough, when Sarwan glanced a leg-side delivery, and was caught behind, triggering a collapse that saw West Indies lose their next five wickets for 37 inside the last 10 overs.

This is the first ODI series for India, since they won the World Cup on home soil two months ago.

SCORES IN BRIEF

WEST INDIES: 214 for 9 in 50 overs (Sarwan 56, Samuels 55, Edwards 21; Harbhajan 3-32, Praveen 2-37, Patel 2-47)

INDIA: 217 for 6 (Sharma 68 not out, Dhawan 51, Raina 43; Martin 2-39, Rampaul 2-58)

Serena set to return

 Tennis

AFP, London

Serena Williams will make her return to tennis after missing almost a year with injury and illness as she takes a wild card entry into next week's Eastbourne grass-court tournament, tournament officials said Tuesday.

The 29-year-old one-time world number one who now stands 25th after her months of inactivity, joins her sister Venus in the field at the English south coast beach town.

"I'm so excited to be healthy enough to compete again," the American said in a statement.

"These past twelve months have been extremely tough and character building. I have so much to be grateful for. I'm thankful to my family, friends, and fans for all of their support. Serena's back!"

Serena last played on the WTA as she won a fourth Wimbledon title in July, 2010 beating Vera Zvonareva in straight sets in the final.

Little more than a week later, she suffered what was described by her management as a cut on her foot suffered while exiting a German restaurant. She later underwent surgery on the medical problem which was never fully explained.

She stayed away from match play but was highly visible in the Hollywood and fashion worlds with foot cast and crutches during her down time.

The 29-year-old was then hit by a blood clot in her lungs last February and was rushed to hospital in Los Angeles for an operation to remove it.

Her main means of communication with the outside world has been her Twitter account, with Tweets never speaking of any tennis plans.

She did drop a hint in April as she sent out a picture of herself on a practise court hitting in a skin-tight, hot-pink bodysuit which said more about fashion and less about actual competition.

The younger Williams has also avoided the tennis topic in recent days, comparing her "booty" to that of six-time french Open winner Rafael Nadal, complaining about not fitting into a pair of jeans and plugging products linked to her for sale on various home shopping networks.

Former number one Williams owns 13 Grand Slam titles, including four at Wimbledon. The Eastbourne tune-up ends two days before the June 20 start at the All England club.

Venus Williams, ranked 32nd, will be competing for the first time since January 21 in Melbourne, when she was beaten in the Australian Open third round by Germany's Andrea Petkovic.

The elder sibling has been suffering with an abdominal muscle injury which has kept her off of the WTA ever since. Venus last played Eastbourne in 1998, standing 1-2 at the venue.

The men's side of the tournament will feature Frenchman Jo-Wilfried Tsonga and Australian Lleyton Hewitt.

Joining the Williams sisters will be new French Open champion Li Na as well as 2010 Paris winner Francesca Schiavone and 2008 Roland Garros winner Ana Ivanovic.

Cook's final

FROM PAGE 16 A team spokesman said Tuesday opening batsman Dilshan had suffered a broken thumb caused by twice being hit by fast bowler Chris Tremlett during his innings of 193 -- the highest individual Test score by a Sri Lankan at Lord's.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: First innings 486 (Prior 126, Cook 96, Morgan 79; Welegedara 4-122, Lakmal 3-126)

SRI LANKA: First innings 479 (Dilshan 193, Paranavitana 65; Finn 4-108, Swann 3-101)

ENGLAND: Second innings 335 for 7 declared (Cook 106, Pietersen 72, Trott 58; Herath 3-87, Fernando 2-92)

SRI LANKA: Second innings 32 for 1 (Sangakkara 12; Tremlett 1-14)

Figo, Ronaldo

FROM PAGE 16 Bangladesh and the response from them was quite positive.

"It is still not decided whether the franchise will consist of divisional, clubs or corporate houses but we are getting good response from teams like Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club and Destiny Group," said Mehdi.

No. 4 position

FROM APGE 16 and National Cricket League was not bad. I also scored some runs during the South Africa trip with the A team.

"I got back my confidence after hitting the hundred in South Africa. Now I have to score some runs for the national team if I get a call for the Zimbabwe tour," said a confident Ashraf.

PCB against

FROM PAGE 16 we don't agree with the proposal of change and we have shown our reservations to the ICC," Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chief operating officer Subhan Ahmed told reporters.

Ahmed said Pakistan and Bangladesh had the right to nominate their candidates.

"We are in touch with the ICC over the matter and will decide the future course of action soon," said Ahmed.

Pakistan has also opposed another suggested amendment in the ICC's constitution allowing the council to suspend members in cases of government interference in the running of national cricket boards.

The role of PCB chairman is widely criticised for being a political appointment by the ruling administration.

 Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Simon Katich's Test career appears over after he was left out of Cricket Australia's contracted players' list for the 2011-12 season on Tuesday.

The 56-Test opening batsman along with Marcus North were the notable omissions from the 25-player list, released by Cricket Australia.

The newcomers offered a central contract were Patrick Cummins, Xavier Doherty, John Hastings, David Hussey, Usman Khawaja, Jason Krejza and James Pattinson.

Chairman of selectors Andrew Hilditch said his panel felt it was opportune to initiate a new opening partnership in time for the next Ashes

series against England in two years' time and there was now no room for 35-year-old Katich.

"Simon has been a fantastic player for Australia and a key and successful member of the Test team in recent years," Hilditch said.

"However, amongst other matters, the selectors' panel felt it was the right time now to start blooding our next opening partnership in preparation for the Ashes.

"The opening partnership is critical to the success of any team and takes time to develop the necessary experience at international level."

Katich's demotion offers another chance for Phillip Hughes, 22, to open the Australian innings along with Shane Watson.

Senior batsman Ricky Ponting, 36, and Mike Hussey, 36, retained their CA

contracts under new Test skipper Michael Clarke.

Spinners Doherty and Krejza were added to the contract list along with off-spinner Nathan Hauritz and legspinner Steven Smith.

Batsman Khawaja, 24, who made his Test debut in last summer's failed home Ashes series, also received his first full contract.

Australia's 2011-12 contracted players: Doug Bollinger, Michael Clarke, Patrick Cummins, Xavier Doherty, Callum Ferguson, Brad Haddin, Ryan Harris, John Hastings, Nathan Hauritz, Ben Hilfenhaus, Phillip Hughes, David Hussey, Michael Hussey, Mitchell Johnson, Usman Khawaja, Jason Krejza, Brett Lee, Shaun Marsh, Tim Paine, James Pattinson, Ricky Ponting, Peter Siddie, Steven Smith, Shane Watson, Cameron White.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Symbol of intrigue

4 iPhone download

7 Nut job

12 Actress Longoria

13 Meadow

14 Foreigner

15 Part of UCLA

16 Beatles ditty

18 Schuss

19 Heavens above

20 "Phooey!"

22 Green prefix

23 Castro's home

27 Young fellow

29 Trafalgar admiral

31 Daniel who's played 007

34 Prepared

35 Gilligan's boat

37 Scratch

38 Carry

39 Simile center

41 Entanglement

45 Its participants must form a line

47 Spring mo.

48 "The Swedish Nightingale"

52 Conk out

53 Alaskan islander

54 Nourished

55 Cozy lodging

56 Boston newspaper

57 Wayne and Worth (Abbr.)

58 Roulette bet

DOWN

1 People of Ponty-pridd

2 Bring forth

3 Fundamental

4 Swiss range

5 Cheated at hide-and-seek

6 "War of the Worlds" effect

7 Methods

8 Every iota

9 Spy-novel org.

10 Jennings of "Jeopardy!"

11 Inseparable

17 Night light?

21 "A Fish Called Wanda" Oscar winner

23 Office worker

24 N.A. portion

25 Physique

26 Whatever number

28 Past

30 Historic time

31 Nashville-based MTV offshoot

32 Carnival city

33 Pismire

36 Cry like a banshee

37 Fridge decoration

40 Check for smells

42 Bottom

43 Put one's two cents in

44 Pollster's find

45 Info measure

46 Toteboard tally

48 Show that spawned "NCIS"

49 Right angle

50 Ultramodernist

51 Gist

Solution time: 25 mins.

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CRYPTOQUIP

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Yesterday's Cryptoquip: TO PRODUCE DELICIOUS, AUTHENTIC ITALIAN SYRUP, YOU MIGHT CONSIDER TAPPING NAPLES MAPLES.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: X equals L