Tampering rampant: Shoaib

Cricket

PTI, New Delhi

Controversial Pakistan speedster Shoaib Akhtar has created a flutter by openly admitting that he, along with all his contemporaries in the team, have regularly indulged in ball-tampering.

Pakistan fast bowlers over generations have always been under scanner for ball-tampering whenever they have got the ball to swing more than usual but Akhtar is the first to admit that he indulged in the malpractice, which is banned in international cricket.

"Almost all Pakistan fast bowlers have tampered with the ball. I may be the first one to openly admit to it but everybody is doing it," the maverick fast bowler has revealed in his justpublished biography "Controversially Yours."

"To be honest, every team in the world tampers with the ball. We probably started it but today koi team doodh ki dhooli nahin hain. No team is innocent and virtually every fast bowler does it. That is the only way to survive because the wickets are so slow.

Akhtar, who was twice suspended by ICC for ball tampering during his career, defends the speed merchants for indulging in this illegal cricketing activity.

"After years of not allowing bouncers, in 2001, the ICC ruled that only one would be allowed per over. The pitches are dead and slow and made to order for batting. It's the bowlers who are curtailed. It's like giving match practice to people. We are hit all over the ground," he lamented in his book.

In his tell-all book, Akhtar cited examples of how he had indulged in doctoring the ball during his playing career. It was in a three-nation tournament in Sri Lanka after 2003 World Cup, the bowler

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh led

India on Friday in paying rich tribute to

the country's charismatic former cricket

captain Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi, who

captain, who brought a new confi-

dence to the Indian cricket scene,'

Singh said in a condolence message a

"Even after his playing days were over,

Pataudi, nicknamed "The Tiger" for

his superb fielding, played 46 Tests

between 1961 and 1975, scoring 2,793

runs at an average of 34.91 with six cen-

turies despite losing his right eye in a car

matic cricketer of his generation," said

legendary former Indian opener Sunil

eye and still to score nearly 3,000 runs

and half-a-dozen centuries in Test

Cricket-loving Pakistanis also paid

tribute to Pataudi, who was equally

popular across the border for his grace

and charismatic character, saying the

death of the charismatic player left a void

cricket tells you what a genius he was."

"Tiger Pataudi was the most charis-

"To bat with almost zero vision in one

he remained an iconic figure, an

embodiment of poise and polish and a

great advocate of sportsmanship."

"He was a dashing and daring

died aged 70 following a lung disease.

Cricket

day after his death.

accident in England.

Gavaskar.

AFP, New Delhi

recalled an incident in Dambulla while playing against New Zealand.

"I remember it being very hot and humid in Dambulla and as is customary with the pitches of the subcontinent, it was an awfully slow track. We were playing New Zealand, we needed results. Out of desperation, I began fussing with the ball. Yes, for those of you who want to know, I did tamper with the ball in that match. And yes I know it's against the rules and not something to be proud of - I aplogised for it," Akhtar wrote.

Not only this, Akhtar was candid in admitting that he has "tampered with



SHOAIB AKHTAR

the ball on many occasions."

"I have tampered with the ball on many occasions. Have been warned several times and even being caught twice - Dambulla was one such instance. I was suspended for a match and fined 75 per cent of the match fees," he said in the book.

But Akhtar also confessed that it had slowly become a habit.

"I can't seem to help it. I have got to do something with the ball. I know this will make a big noise but I won't lie

Former Pakistan captain and a con-

"I recently watched him on television

temporary of Pataudi, Hanif

and he looked great, but the sudden

news of his death is a shock to me," said

Mohammad, nicknamed "Little Master"

Former Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB)

chairman Shaharyar Khan, a cousin of

Pataudi, said his death "will leave a great

void" in cricket, adding that the former

captain "was a great ambassador of

Sharad Pawar, a federal Indian minis-

ter, said Pataudi was "one of India's

greatest, most charismatic and flam-

"He was a man of exceptional talent

who turned out to be an inspiration to

millions of cricketers, not only in India

but across the globe," said Pawar. "It

was an honour and privilege to have

making India competitive and respected

in world cricket during his illustrious

Pataudi was always credited with

He did not have genuine pacemen at his

disposal but shrewdly used the renowned

spin quartet of Bishan Bedi, Erapalli

Prasanna, Bhagwat Chandrasekhar and

Srinivas Venkataraghavan to put the oppo-

best thing that happened to Indian

"To my mind, Tiger Pataudi was the

sition on the back foot.

International Cricket Council chief

for his batting in 1950s and 60s.

Mohammad said the news was a shock.

PM leads Patuadi tribute

in the cricket world.

Indian cricket."

boyant captains."

known him."

career.

Not only about his own antics but Akhtar also revealed the secret of an unnamed Pakistan cricketer who actually changed a ball in order to get more reverse swing going.

"I won't name him but one Pakistan cricketer actually switched the ball in the umpires' pocket with one that reversed like crazy. Umpires usually keep the ball in their coat pockets and then hang their coat up for lunch. That was when the transfer occurred. After this incident, they now leave their coats in a locked room.'

Akhtar then gives a detailed account of how one can doctor the ball and asked ICC to at least legalise scruffing the seam with nails!

"There are so many ways to prepare the ball; It's not just a matter of scratching it. I have used my boot nails and zip of my back pocket. Many bowlers use Vaseline or gum on the ball. The only way to stop this is for the ICC to ensure that at least some pitches are prepared in favour of bowlers."

"That would make the game less one-sided and more balanced. The game, especially now, has become very unequal and only favours the batsman - if you bowl a no-ball, the batsman gets a free-hit; bouncers have been curtailed; and a bowler can't even touch his hair before picking up the ball", he wrote.

"They have restricted us so mercilessly, that I find it very difficult to feel entirely guilty about ball tampering."

He further added, "Since, we can't seem to stop doing it, may be it's not a bad idea to legalise it and set rules for it. After all, it's still an art to use that ball. You need the pace and skill. Not everyone can do it. Perhaps some manipulation of the ball, like scratching it with your nails could be legally allowed. know I am going to get it in the neck for saying all this."

cricket from the time India got Test sta-

tus. He was the first Indian captain to

drill 'Indian-ness' into the Indian dress-

"He was the best captain the spin

day cricket, described Pataudi as a

"hero" while prolific Indian batsman

Rahul Dravid described him as an

world. I had the privilege of meeting him

on a few occasions. World cricket will

miss a hero like him. I really respected

captain at the age of 21 during a tour of

the West Indies in 1962 when the then

skipper Nari Contractor was injured

after being hit on the head by a bouncer

He led India in 40 of his 46 Tests, win-

"He changed the complexion of

Indian cricket. He was the one captain

who understood the strength (spin) of

the Indian side and nurtured it," he said.

ning nine and securing the country's

Pataudi became India's youngest

"It's a terrible loss to the cricketing

ing-room," said Bedi.

tive careers."

"inspiration."

him," said Tendulkar.

from Charlie Griffith.

tour of New Zealand.

spinner.

FEDERATION CUP TT Javed, Soma

crowned

SPORTS REPORTER

Javed of Bangladesh Biman and Soma of Abahani clinched the men's and women's singles titles respectively in the Federation Cup Invitational Table Tennis Tournament at the Wooden Floor Gymnasium yesterday.

Javed defeated Himel 3-1 in the fourth and final match while Soma beat Rumi by the same margin to emerge champion. Hridoy finished second in the men's group while Rahima of Biman finished second in the women's.

The title of men's doubles went to Molar while Biman had to be satisfied with a runners-up trophy.

Abahani also became champions in women's doubles with Biman finishing as runner-up.

Sheikh Russel KC became champions in team event while Palolic Group became runners-up in the same event, said a press release yesterday.

BGB win; Army, Police draw

SPORTS REPORTER

Border Guard of Bangladesh (BGB) won their super league match of the Runner 13th Premier Division Kabaddi League when they defeated Bangladesh Navy by 39-17 points at the Kabaddi Stadium yesterday. Group A champions BGB, who grabbed two creditable lona, had led the first half by 14-12 points.

In the other match, Group B champions Army drew 18-18 with Bangladesh Police in an entertaining encounter. Police led the first half by 8-7 pints, but neither of the teams could win a lona.

In the two matches to be played today, BGB will take on Police while Army will play against Navy.

Marsh new

AFP, Colombo

Former Australian batsman Geoff Marsh has been named Sri Lanka's coach on a two-year contract, the country's cricket board said Friday.

new assignment on September 27," Sri Lanka

"With his vast coaching and playing experience at the highest level, Sri Lanka Cricket is confident that he would be an ideal choice."

MU at full strength

(1400 GMT unless stated)

Saturday

Man City v Everton (1145 GMT), Arsenal

v Bolton, Chelsea v Swansea, Liverpool

v Wolverhampton, Newcastle v

Blackburn, West Brom v Fulham, Wigan

v Tottenham, Stoke v Man Utd (1630)

Sunday

QPR v Aston Villa (1500)

Monday

AFP, London



Sir Alex Ferguson will have an embarrassment of attacking riches at his disposal as Manchester United aim to cement their lead at the top of the Premier League against Stoke

on Saturday.

United travel to the Britannia Stadium having made a blistering start to their title defence, scoring 21 goals in five consecutive victories including last weekend's 3-1 defeat of Chelsea at Old Trafford.

While Wayne Rooney has been in sensational form for United, scoring in each of United's five wins for a total haul of nine

goals, Ferguson is also buoyed by the fact that all of his strik-**FIXTURES** ers are now available.

Danny Welbeck returned to duty in the 3-0 defeat of Leeds in the League Cup, while Javier Hernandez is back in training after recovering from a wild challenge from Ashley Cole last weekend.

Former England striker Michael Owen has also served notice of his match sharpness with two goals against Leeds

on Tuesday, a game which also saw Dimitar Berbatov complete a full 90 minutes for the first time this season. Ominously for Stoke, they face United having

been thrashed 4-0 last weekend at Sunderland, a game which ended a nine-match unbeaten run. Although Stoke restored some pride with a penalty shoot-out League Cup win over

Tottenham in midweek, Potters skipper Ryan Shawcross admitted his team faced a daunting task against the champions. "They are a top team. But everyone is

beatable, and we know if we have the fans right behind us and we perform in a way we know we can, then we do have a chance," Shawcross said.

Ferguson meanwhile has been paying more attention to his defence, where he hopes to have Rio Ferdinand available after the central defender's three-game absence

with a calf problem. Ferguson's defensive headaches pale in comparison to the problems facing Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger, whose side face Bolton at the Emirates after leaking four goals in last weekend's calamitous 4-3 defeat at

Blackburn. Wenger was irritated this week when asked if he would consider bringing in a former Arsenal great such as Tony Adams or Martin

Keown to work with the defence. Second-placed Manchester City mean-

while will aim to improve their dismal recent run of form against Everton at

Eastlands.

Everton have won seven

and lost just one of their last eight encounters with City, although David Moyes men will have their work cut out as they face Roberto Mancini's side, who are desperate to atone for squandering a twogoal lead in Sunday's 2-2 draw with Fulham.

Chelsea aim to stay in touch at the top against promoted Swansea, with Fernando Torres aiming

to banish the memory of his horror-show miss in last weekend's 3-1 defeat at Manchester United.

Football

FROM PAGE 16 Aminul Haque are also involved with this

initiatives. Vice-chancellor of BUET, professor SM

Nazrul Islam inaugurated the activities of CFS while former national coaches Golam Sarwar Tipu, Shafiqul Islam Manik, Jasimuddin Joshy, Sajjad Hossain Siddique and BFF member Amirul Islam were among others present.

Mourinho worried

Saturday

(1700GMT unless otherwise stated):

Athletic Bilbao v Villarreal, Sevilla v

Valencia, Real Madrid v Rayo Vallecano

(1900GMT), Barcelona v Atletico

Madrid (2100GMT)

Sunday

Mallorca v Real Sociedad (1100GMT)

Levante v Espanyol (1500GMT),

Granada v Osasuna (1700GMT),

Sporting Gijon v Racing Santander

(1900GMT), Zaragoza v Malaga

(2100GMT)

AFP, Madrid



Ahead of Saturday's visit of Rayo Vallecano, Jose Mourinho has admitted he is "worried" by Real Madrid's form and says they cannot afford to drop any more points cheaply. Since a 4-2 victory over Getafe in **FIXTURES**

their last outing at the Bernabeu, Real have suffered on their travels, slumping to defeat at Levante before a goalless draw at Racing Santander left them five points off the lead held by

Real Betis. Portuguese internationals Pepe and Fabio Coentrao will be missing for Real, having both picked up muscular injuries in the shock 1-0 defeat by Levante, while Ricardo Carvalho and new

signing Nuri Sahin are also unavailable. Rayo Vallecano have had a mixed start on

their return to La Liga. Having opened the campaign with draws

against Real Zaragoza and Athletic Bilbao, Rayo's 1-0 victory at Getafe last weekend was followed by a 2-1 home defeat in mid-week against Levante. Fortunately for Mourinho, Barcelona are

not yet firing on all cylinders either and lead Real by just a point after twice coming from behind to draw 2-2 at second-placed Valencia on Wednesday.

The Catalans were majestic in their 8-0 thrashing of Sporting Gijon last weekend, but they were indebted to a late equaliser from

FIXTURES

(1300 GMT unless stated):

Saturday

Bologna v Inter Milan (1600), AC Milan

v Cesena (1845), Napoli v Fiorentina

Sunday

Chievo v Genoa (1030), Atalanta v

Novara, Cagliari v Udinese, Catania v

Cesc Fabregas at the Mestalla in mid-week. After the game, which has left Barca four

points off the top, coach Pep Guardiola was once again drawn into a debate over the socalled 'League of Two'. Barcelona host a resurgent Atletico

Madrid on Saturday and will hope to have Gerard Pique available after the Spain centre-back returned to full training on Monday

following a calfinjury. Attacking midfielders

Andres Iniesta and Alexis Sanchez have trained alone all week, however, and are not expected to return in time for Saturday.

Meanwhile, Atletico will arrive fresh from a brace of 4-0 victories at home to Racing Santander and Sporting Gijon, the goals of new signing Radamel Falcao having turned around their early-

season form. Saturday's other big game sees Sevilla entertain Valencia, as both teams bid to extend their unbeaten

records and prove their readiness to crash the Barca-Real duopoly.

Siddikur survives

FROM PAGE 16 Jbe Kruger of South Africa who returned with a

71 for second place at the 1.7 million dollar event jointly sanctioned by the Asian Tour and Japan Golf Tour.

This has been the worst two weeks in the season for Siddikur who could not avoid the cut last week in Macau Open where he ended on 86th after two rounds amongst 145 participants.

SCHOOL HANDBALL

12 matches decided on day 3

SPORTS REPORTER

Twelve matches of the Fruitfill Boys' School Handball Tournament (U-12) were decided on the third day at the Handball Stadium yesterday.

In the matches played yesterday, Summer Field beat Aparajeyo Bangladesh 10-2, South Bridge defeated St Gregory's High School 6-2, Dhanmondi Tutorial outplayed Play-Pen 13-4, Sunnydale outclassed South Point 12-1, Scholastica beat Green Herald 10-4, BIS defeated Hid International 14-1, BAF Shaheen School & College outplayed Hid International 4-2, Narinda Govt. High School beat Summer Field 5-1, SOS Shishu Palli crushed Aparajeyo Bangladesh 8-0, St Gregory's High School edged past Play-Pen 8-6, Dhanmondi Tutorial defeated South Bridge 12-6

Some performances

FROM PAGE 16

Islam and Syed Rasel could have used the tournament like a trampoline for the rest of the season but they hardly put a foot right.

Instead, it was Elias Sunny who continued to impress anyone who was interested to notice.

With his left-arm spin, Sunny has proved to be more than just a promising performer as in two consecutive domestic finals in the space of less than a year, he has delivered. Last year, it was Sunny who blasted the match-winning 87 to propel Dhaka to the National Cricket League one-day competition when all seemed lost against Barisal in the final. This time too, Sunny had a say in the final. In his eight-over spell, he tied up the Tigers with his accurate left-arm spin, conceding only 13 runs as he picked up two wickets.

His performance was easily overshadowed by the halfcenturies, brilliant catches and his own batting failure but take away his spell and Bangladesh A would have been chasing a 200-plus total. Sunny also topped the bowling economy chart (2.93 per over) and he's second in the wickettaker's list with seven wickets.

The selection panel's reticence about Sunny and disapproval of Rubel ("I am not happy with the bowling performances" -- Akram) is slightly surprising. Maybe more is expected from Rubel and he was stereotyped with Shafiul Islam and Nazmul Hossain (who took just six wickets between them).

Sunny's effort should be appreciated more vocally as it is more than clear that Shakib Al Hasan lacks a good spin partner in Test cricket while Abdur Razzak has also seen better days in ODIs. If someone like Akram Khan encourages Sunny, it would inspire the rest of the spinners who are vying for a spot in the national side.

Since the selectors have admitted that their net has widened, and Narinda Govt. High School appreciating some of the lesser known players would go a long drew 5-5 with SOS Shishu Palli. way into finding even more talented gems outside their net.

Gayle, Bravo

FROM PAGE 16 the board of directors after which a conclusive statement

will be made." Bravo was not picked though he was considered for selection, while Sarwan was left out due to injury. Sarwan had been recalled for the home series against Pakistan and India, and looked in good touch during the India ODIs. He struggled in the Test series that followed, though, and missed the final match. Shivnarine Chanderpaul retained his spot in the Test side following a match-saving

effort in the Basseterre Test. Ramdin's return meant there was no place for Carlton Baugh in the ODI set-up, though Baugh was included in the Test side. Openers Kieran Powell and Kraigg Brathwaite, who made their Test debuts in the home season, also found places in the touring party, while Barbados allrounder Carlos Brathwaite got a maiden call-up to the ODI side.

The tour begins on October 7 with the first of two warm-up matches, followed by a solitary Twenty20, three ODIs and two Tests. Darren Sammy will continue to lead the side.

quartet played under. He got the best out of all of us at various stages of our respec-Sachin Tendulkar, the world's leading run-getter in both Test and one-

SL coach

"He (Marsh) takes up his first series win abroad on the 1967-68 Former off-spinner Prasanna said Pataudi was a "dream captain" for a Cricket said in a statement.

Milan look to rebound

AFP, Rome



AC Milan and Inter face the perfect opportunity to kickstart their disastrous Serie A campaigns when they play the bottom two on Saturday. Milan, who have two

rock bottom Cesena, who have yet to pick up a single point. Inter, meanwhile, travel to Bologna, who picked up their first point of the season in a 1-

1 draw at 10-man Juventus on

Wednesday. While those clashes may sound easy on paper, the reality is somewhat different for the two title favourites. Inter may be playing the

Juventus, Lazio v Palermo, Siena v table but they are only above Bologna by a single goal's difference. Inter have started the season with away right man for the task. defeats at Palermo (4-3) and Novara (3-1)

team one off the bottom of the

home by Roma. Victories over the minnows are certainly not a foregone conclusion for Inter at the moment.

Italian Supercup and been humiliated 1-0 at

while being held to a stale goalless draw at

League, Inter have lost four out of five official

matches this season and won none. That makes their form the worst of any team in Italy.

Gian Piero Gasperini paid for that most ignominious of starts to his Inter career with his job as he was fired on Wednesday, the day

after Inter's Novara debacle. He has been replaced by Claudio Ranieri who is no stranger to picking up the pieces at clubs.

He was the man who dragged up a faltering Roma two seasons ago to challenge

Interfor the title. Before that he guided newly-promoted Juventus to a third place finish on their return to Serie A and he was well on course for going one better the next season before Juve fired him two games from the end of the season.

Inter president Massimo Moratti believes Ranieri is the

Champions Milan have ruled out a similar drastic change but they are only one point

better off. Their problems are different, however, as they have a long injury list and on Wednesday also lost Brazilian forward Pato for a month to a Having also lost to Milan in last month's hamstring strain, leaving them short up front with Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Robinho and Kevinhome to Trabzonspor in the Champions Prince Boatengalso in the treatment room.

Thorpe back

AFP, Sydney

Five-time Olympic champion Ian Thorpe was Friday named in Australia's team for the World Cup meets in Singapore, Beijing and Tokyo, confirming his return to international swimming.

Thorpe, who retired in 2006 but is back in the pool aiming for next year's London Olympics, will compete in all three Asian legs of the World Cups, starting in Singapore on November 4-5.

This will followed by

Beijing (November 8-9) and

Tokyo (November 12-13).

Fellow Olympic gold medallist Libby Trickett will also make her international comeback at the same events. "I'm excited about being

part of an Australian swim team again after all these years," said Thorpe, who will join them from his training base in Switzerland, where he has been preparing with coach Guennadi Touretski.