# Oldies face the music

## Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

Pressure is mounting on India's ageing Test batsmen to make way for fresh talent after the team sunk to the "lowest of lows" in Australia where they suffered a humiliating 4-0 series whitewash.

The eighth consecutive overseas Test defeat on Saturday -- following an identical scoreline in England -- left a battered India searching for a way to stop the rot.

Fingers were being pointed at underperforming batting stars Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid and Venkatsai Laxman -- all pillars of the Indian lineup for more than a decade.

Tendulkar, the world's leading Test and one-day batsman who turns 39 in April, was clearly burdened by the pressure of chasing his 100th international century, a feat which continues to elude him.

His highest score in the series was 80 and even though he made 287 runs at an average of 35.87, the milestone -which no other player has achieved -seemed to shackle his usually freeflowing batting style.

Dravid, 39, the second-highest scorer in Test cricket after Tendulkar, managed just 194 runs in eight innings at a poor average of 24.25 with one half-century.

And Laxman, 37, who has thrived against Australia in the past, looked

Solace for

Through the arrival of the

BPL, the scope has opened

up further. Here every fran-

chise have required an elon-

gated support staff with the

Chittagong, Dhaka, Barisal,

Rajshahi and Sylhet fran-

Duronto Rajshahi roped

in former national cricketers

in the important positions.

Khaled Mashud was hired as

the coach while former

national selectors Athar Ali

Khan and Faruque Ahmed

will be the team's consul-

tants while Hannan Sarkar,

who opened for Bangladesh

in Test cricket, will act as

Mashud's assistant. Sylhet

Royals have former selectors

Rafiqul Alam and Naimur

Rahman as their consultants

while also hiring Golam

Faruk Suru (bowling coach),

Monir Hossain (trainer) and

Sajal (physio) to assist Stuart

Law (head coach) and Jason

Khaled Mahmud is the

head coach of Chittagong

Kings with national team's

analyst Nasir Ahmed and

selector Minhazul Abedin

also involved. The Dhaka

Gladiators have taken Ian

Pont as their head coach

with Mohammad Rafique

(bowling coach), Vibhabh

Singh (physio) and Grant

Chief selector Akram

Khan is helping out the

Barisal Burners who have

Places are probably up for

grabs in the Khulna fran-

chise who have so far only

involved former cricketer

Zahid Razzaque Masum, as

Luden (trainer).

main man.

Swift (fielding coach).

chises hiring early.

FROM PAGE 16

woefully out of touch as he jabbed and plodded to 155 runs at 19.37.

Tendulkar will get another chance to make amends in the upcoming oneday tri-series against Australia and Sri Lanka, but Dravid and Laxman are not part of the limited-overs team.

With India not due to play another Test series until September, the senior players have time to ponder their future amid calls for an overhaul of the side.

"Indian cricket has sunk to the lowest of lows," wrote Cricinfo editor Sambit Bal, who said the revered trio could no longer be banked on to

"In another time these very men... would have been relied on to forge a revival. But their time has gone now. Indian cricket has no option but to embrace the future, however uncertain it may seem."

Even International Cricket Council president Sharad Pawar, a former Indian cricket chief, felt younger players needed to be thrown in the ring.

"The time has come for some changes in the Indian team," Pawar has to take risks and give an opportunity to the younger generation.

"Such a move might change the entire atmosphere in the team."

But former India captain and spin legend Bishan Bedi called for an immediate end to the witch-hunt against the senior players.

snippets

Bangladesh Police AC and Friends Social Welfare

Association won their respective matches of the

Destiny Dhaka Metropolis 2nd Division Football

League at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal

Snangha 1-0, thanks to the decisive goal by Amirul

Islam while Friends Social Welfare Association also

recorded an identical 1-0 win over Kawran Bazar

Progati Sangha with Loknath Bebnath scoring the all-

Four more schools moved into the District Level com-

petition of the National School Football Islami Bank

Diroi Dakni High School beat Char Bangalia High

School 1-0 in the Haluaghat Upazila final, RK Govt High

School defeated Shamganj Highs School 4-3 in tie-

breaker in the Gouripur Upazila final, Nawab

Institution defeated Kadamtali High School 2-0 in the

Dhonbari Upazila final and Poyari Gokul Chandra High

School defeated Baula High School 3-2 in tiebreaker in

Former national footballers Badal Roy and Sheikh

Mohammad Aslam were elected president and gen-

eral secretary respectively of the Sonali Otit Club in its

AGM and election held on Saturday. The 31-member

committee, led by Badal and Aslam, were elected

Tournament emerging Upazila champions yesterday.

Bangladesh Police defeated Shadhinata Krira

SPORTS REPORTER

important goal.

School Football

the Fulpur Upazila final.

Sonali Otit Club

Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

"Please show some respect to the players who have served the country for so long," Bedi told the Press Trust of India. "They don't need our suggestions as to when they should retire.

"Someone will eventually take their places. But we will probably never be able to find replacements for these once-in-a-generation players."

Bedi last week lashed out at what he said was the Indian cricket board's obsession with the glitzy Indian Premier League (IPL), accusing it of ignoring the longer form of the domestic cricket.

"The board's priorities are wrong," Bedi said. "The Ranji Trophy [first-class domestic tournament] should be our most valued tournament, not the IPL.

"Mark my words, this IPL will strike a fatal blow to Indian cricket and that day is not far."

The annual IPL, which started in 2008, features players from around the world playing Twenty20 cricket for private franchises, with multi-milliondollar fees for the top stars.

Meanwhile, Indian cricket chief told the CNN-IBN news channel. "One Narayanaswamy Srinivasan defended the battered Test team, saying the oneday series could change the tourists' fortunes.

> "There is no need for a knee-jerk reaction," he said. "We have faith in the team. We should not put pressure on the players. Only months back they won the World Cup."

> > **FROM PAGE 16**

## Pakistan spin duo moves up

AFP, Abu Dhabi

The Pakistani spin duo of Saeed Ajmal and Abdul Rehman were rewarded for their match-winning efforts against the world's number one-ranked Test outfit England by moving up in the world bowling rankings released on Sunday.

Ajmal and Rehman destroyed the England batting on Saturday in the second Test here taking nine wickets between them as the English were all out for 72 in their second innings, their lowest total ever in tests against the Pakistanis.

It gave Pakistan an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three Test series as they won by 72 runs.

Ajmal took 3-22 while Rehman recorded career best figures of 6-25 which saw the former rise one place to number two in the ICC (International Cricket Council) bowlers' rankings, while Rehman is in ninth place after moving up five places and is in the top ten for the first time.

Ajmal -- who also reached the landmark of 100 Test wickets in only his 19th match -- trails number-one ranked Dale Steyn of South Africa by 84 points.

This is the first time in 23 years that two Pakistan spinners figure inside the top 10 of the Test player rankings. In September 1988, Abdul Qadir was ranked fifth and Iqbal Qasim 10th, the ICC said.

### Brutality

**FROM PAGE 16** during the match on Friday

morning. Nazrul was rushed to

Kishoreganj Adhunik Sadar hospital from where he was shifted to Bazitpui Zahirul Islam medical college hospital in critical condition where he succumbed at around 12:00pm the following day.

Mir Musharraf Hossain, officer-in-charge of Sadar police station said that the body was sent to Kishoreganj Adhunik Sadar hospital morgue for

The deceased's elder brother filed a murder case with Kishoreganj Sadar police station against Rafiq who had gone into hiding, informed Hossain.

## Security team

FROM PAGE 16

# Andy praises Pakistan

Cricket

AFP, Abu Dhabi England coach Andy Flower said Sunday Pakistan's series-clinching Test win would

be a huge boost to the country, but called on his team to show their mettle on subsequent matches in the subcontinent. Pakistan thumped England by 72 runs

in the second Test here on Saturday, taking an unassailable 2-0 lead in the threematch series. They won the first Test by ten wickets in Dubai.

The third and final Test begins in Dubai from February 3.

**Under Flower England** had been unbeaten in their last nine Test series, which saw them rise to number one in rankings last year.

But after being set a tricky 145-run target to win on Saturday, England were dismissed for a paltry 72 runs as Pakistan's spin bowlers came to the

"We realise that we haven't been very skilful

in dealing with that type of cricket. In saying that, it's also right to praise the Pakistan team for what they have done. They beat us fair and square," said Flower. "They have beaten us properly in two

matches. They have fought hard and worked hard at their game and in a way I'm very happy for them. It's good for their cricket and it's good for their country." Flower, a former Zimbabwean batsman,

said defeats were a 'wake-up' call for England. "It was a wake-up call no one wanted to get.

Not to that degree. But, yes it is," said Flower. "Yesterday [Saturday] was very poor. The

three days preceding that were pretty good. We put ourselves in a good position where we could have won the Test but then per-

formed very badly with the bat to lose it.

"We didn't put any pressure on their bowlers in the second innings. We allowed them to bowl and create pressure. In saying that, the conditions to play against quality spinners were difficult and we weren't good enough."

Pakistan spin duo Abdul Rehman, who recorded career-best figures of 6-25, and Saeed Ajmal (3-22) led the fightback after they had conceded a first-innings lead of 70 runs.

Flower said dropping a few catches in the first innings was crucial.

"Maybe we dropped a couple of important catches, but other than that the bowlers and fielders were outstanding and Monty Panesar was great. But obviously our batting against spin let us down."

England dropped Misbahul Haq on 30, who went on to make 84. Panesar, playing his first Test since the Cardiff Test in 2009 Ashes, took 6-62 to bowl Pakistan out for 214 in the second innings.

Flower admitted that not playing well in the subcontinent was a big challenge to overcome.

"This is a great challenge for all of us. The issues are not going to disappear. We've got another Test. We've got a one-day and T20 series, and then we've also got Sri Lanka and India before the year is out. "So these issues will not disappear and

we've got to face them with skill and a bit of courage. We've got to be a lot better than we were yesterday. Each individual will have to work very hard in working out his method of scoring." When asked if batsmen repeating mis-

takes was frustrating, Flower said: "I think that is fair comment, yes. We expect to learn quickly and that is a big part of our job, and my job."

# Misbah wants respect

ANDY FLOWER

### Cricket

AFP, Abu Dhabi

Pakistan captain Misbahul Haq on Sunday said he hoped his team's series win over Test cricket's number one side England will earn them respect from the cricketing world after a turbulent period which tarnished their image.

Dogged by off-the-field problems like failed dope tests and lack of discipline, Pakistan cricket hit the lowest ebb on their 2010 tour of England when three of their top players were caught in a spot-fixing scandal.

The then Test captain Salman Butt and pacemen Mohammad Asif and Mohammad Aamer were banned for conniving over the bowlers deliberately bowling no-balls during the Lord's Test against England, and getting paid for that by agent Mazhar Majeed.

Last November all three and Majeed were sentenced to prison terms by an English court.

But since the scandal, Pakistan have fared well both on and off the field under an astute captain Misbah.

Pakistan beat England by 72 runs in the

second Test to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series, their fourth series win on the trot and eighth win in 14 Tests under Misbah, who took over two months after the scandal.

And Pakistan's resurgence, Misbah feels September last year.

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should earn them respect. "I think the whole world should acknowl-

edge and accept that Pakistan cricket is coming up, the way our players are performing and they should accept it. Such (negative) things can happen anywhere and we must forget them," said Misbah.

Misbah, 37, stressed his team will build further on the success against England.

fifties as captain. "I think whichever team is doing well it

should be accepted, our team deserves that

will be replaced by former Australian batsman Dav Whamore after the series, said these are good days to relish after the bad times.

opener.

team has done well to transform it."

coach after Waqar Younis quit the post in

hired Sarwar Imran as their AFP, Melbourne



manager, while picking up Robin Singh as their coach. The opening up of such an avenue also means that other coaches, trainers, etc can feel encouraged for opportuni-

ties in the next seasons. Out of everything that is wrong about the BPL, this is one area that could provide succour to those who miss out due to lack of openings.

# Djoker's

FROM PAGE 16 past five hours.

At 4-4, Djokovic looped a backhand long after a 31shot rally the longest of the match and then collapsed with his arms and legs

spread wide. He looked hardly able to pick himself and his racket up, but he broke two games later when Nadal, finally showing signs of fatigue, netted a backhand.

Still, Nadal wasn't quite done. Djokovic had to save a break point with a crosscourt backhand, crossing himself as he limped back to the baseline, before finally claiming victory with his 57th winner of the match.

unopposed.

established stars. Azarenka's 6-3, 6-0 win over three-time

released on Monday. The Belarusian was the fifth different women's Grand Slam winner in a row, and the fourth first-time champion in succession, following Li Na at Roland Garros, Petra Kvitova at Wimbledon and Samantha Stosur at the US Open.

"I think it's a great thing for women's tennis," Azarenka said. "We have a good

"With Petra we had amazing matches. Unfortunately I haven't beaten her, but I'm really looking forward to that.

you know, Serena [Williams] is back, Kim [Clijsters], I think it's great for women's tennis.

Stosur winning a Grand Slam, I think it's a great competition and we can really look forward for the women's game. It's at a great round match to 22-year-old German level right now."

The 21-year-old Kvitova went into the tournament as one of the favourites but was beaten in the semifinals by Sharapova, who

agreed there were exciting times ahead. "In terms of what the tour has to offer, I hope that we have a lot of great

## also come to the pre-transfer

scene with an inflated budget compared to the last season. "Mohammedan's huge

Mohammedan

budget has forced us to spend more because the players are demanding higher pay and we have to spend Tk 10 to 15 lakh more than our original budget," said Abahani coach Mahbub Harun adding that they were trying to regain the services of their old guns as well as trying to confirm a few national players.

Harun said that two to three players are getting highest payment of Tk 5 lakh each but did not reveal their names. "We told the players that we

will pay as much as they demand but they will have to promise to play for us as the club needs to sit for a meeting and we will confirm them in a few days," said Harun. Like the giants

Mohammedan and Abahani, Sonali Bank are also going to form a strong squad with an inflated budget as they have kept their sights on the up and coming national players as well as retaining the services of the old guard.

However, Usha Krira Chakra and Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club are reportedly going to form their squad with players from Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protishthan which will make their budget much lower than the other clubs.

# 'New generation is here'



Newly crowned Australian Open champion Victoria Azarenka believes women's tennis is in for a fascinating 12 months as a new generation challenges the supremacy of the

Grand Slam winner Maria Sharapova was the 22-year-old's first triumph at a major championships, and will also put her the top of the next women's rankings list

rivalry, I would say.

"But with Maria playing really well now,

"With Li Na winning a Grand Slam, Sam

tennis, and personally, I hope I do, too,' said the Russian.

While the changes are positive for the up-

and-coming players, the Australian Open may have seen the beginning of the end for a number of Grand Slam winners.

Williams, 30, who is virtually a part-time player due to injuries and a lack of motivation, was soundly beaten in the fourth round by unheralded Russian Ekaterina Makarova.

The American, a 13-time Grand Slam

winner, didn't play after last year's US Open, later admitting she had fallen out of love with tennis. She came into the tournament underdone after injuring her ankle in Brisbane and despite cruising through her first three matches, she had no answer to 56th-ranked

Makarova, who had not been past a first round since August. Clijsters, 28, has already indicated this is her last year on the tour and she looked capable of defending her title after outplaying now-deposed number one Caroline Wozniacki, before she ran into Azarenka in

the semifinals.

Clijsters had also come back from four | 19 Quartz match points down in her thrilling fourthround clash against Li, but was unable to repeat the feat against the eventual champion.

Stosur crumbled under the pressure of home expectations when she lost to littleknown Romanian Sorana Cirstea in the first round, while two-time Grand Slam winner Svetlana Kuznetsova, 26, lost her fourth Sabine Lisicki.

But there were promising signs for former French Open winner and ex-world number one Ana Ivanovic, who will return to the top 20 after reaching the fourth round, and for Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska, who will rise to six.

# autopsy.

The advice of the security team will be crucial to decide whether the BCB sends the national cricket team to Pakistan in April for a proposed tour.

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer **ACROSS** 36 Come to 1 Cama point 38 Bankroll bridge

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> um 44 Humor 45 Apprehends 46 Hodge-

podge 50 60 sec. 51 Sprite 52 "Catcher in the 53 Witness

"We have put everything behind us," said Misbah, who has led from the front hitting 12

and with the self confidence we have, we can do better. Coach Mohsin Khan, who rather unluckily

"I definitely agree with Misbah, we deserve more respect for the performances we have put together," said Khan, a former

"Pakistan cricket has suffered badly in the last two years but the management and the

Khan said the impressive win over Eng-

land will only improve Pakistan's image. "A win over the world's top team is the best thing Pakistan could have achieved," said Khan, who was appointed interim

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**CRYPTOQUIP** 

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