

Ricky axe not 'personal'

AFP, Sydney

Captain Michael Clarke says he is confident his friendship with Ricky Ponting will endure despite his role in this week's axing of the Australian great from the one-day team, reports said Friday.

The former skipper said he had been informed by selectors that he did not fit into their plans for the one-day team, but despite speculation about his future, he was not retiring from Test cricket.

Clarke faced an early test of his new role on the selection panel by making the tough call to dump Ponting after 375 ODI appearances over 17 years.

He said the pair would continue to work together as teammates and batting partners in the Test team, next in action in the West Indies in April.

"I'm 100 percent part of the selection panel," Clarke told newspapers Friday ahead the tri-series match against Sri Lanka in Hobart, the capital of Ponting's home state Tasmania.

"That's now part of the captain's job. We've made this decision as a panel.

"It is tough not having the great Ricky Ponting out there playing for us but that's the decision we've made. Obviously the 2015 World Cup is something we have spoken about as a panel. I'm 100 percent part of that."

Chittagong

FROM PAGE 16
exquisite shots. The two sixes and two boundaries put the spark on his unbeaten 43-ball 48 while at the same time took the Kings to the safety of a 100-plus total.

He found little support elsewhere as Elias Sunny picked up three wickets. Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Pollard also took one apiece.

The loss gave Chittagong a timely boost after the two consecutive defeats as they now have ten points from eight games. Dhaka on the other hand have eight from eight.

Chittagong opener Tamim Iqbal sat out the game with fever.

SCORES IN BRIEF
CHITTAGONG: 120-6 in 20 overs (Jahurul 40, Bravo 48 not out; Sunny 3-23).
DHAKA: 107-9 in 20 overs (Anamul 22, Ashraful 20; Cooper 3-13, Bravo 2-21, Enamul 2-15).
Result: Chittagong won by 13 runs.

Siddikur ups

FROM PAGE 16
Meesawat on 204 while India's Gaganjeet Bhullar and P. Gulfam signed for matching 207s to take tied-fourth at the 300,000-dollar Asian Tour event.

Bangladesh's other two participants Zamal Hossain Mollah (four-over-par) and Shakhawat Hossain Sohel (15-over-par) failed to make the cut.

Local snippets

FROM PAGE 16
Lucky and Arif pair to book their places in the semifinals.

School football

Gosairhat Idilpur Pilot High School of Shariatpur and Baligaon High School of Feni emerged upazila champions of National School Football Islami Bank Tournament beating their respective opponents in the zonal finals yesterday. Gosairhat beat Noria BL High School 2-0 while Baligaon beat Daulatput Haq Bahadur High School 1-0 to make it to the next round.

BJMC, F'ganj

FROM PAGE 16
"The boys could not perform according to their ability as the opponents played negative football. Besides, the game was played with a new brand of football which was introduced for the first time in the league, resulting in a struggle to control the ball by the players," said BJMC coach Jakaria Babu.



Sri Lanka batsman Nuwan Kulasekara (C) celebrates scoring the winning runs in their ODI match against Australia in Hobart yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Thrilling win takes SL atop

Cricket

AFP, Hobart

Sri Lanka won a thrilling tri-series one-day international by three wickets over Australia with four balls to spare on Friday at the Bellerive Oval, taking them top of the tournament standings.

Peter Forrest scored the first century of the series with 104 to carry Australia to 280 for six off their 50 overs, but it proved insufficient as Sri Lanka kept ahead of the run chase and survived a late wobble to seal victory.

Skipper Mahela Jayawardene produced a man-of-the-match performance with 85 off 81 balls and combined with Dinesh Chandimal's 80 from 100 balls to hand Sri Lanka a strong launching pad.

The Australians looked as if they might fight back for a win, taking three wickets in the last five overs, but Thisara Perera (21 not out) and Nuwan Kulasekara (4 not out) got Sri Lanka home with some lusty hitting.

Kulasekara hit the winning runs as Sri Lanka reached 283 for seven off 49.2 overs.

The win puts Sri Lanka top of the triangular tournament on 15 points, one

ahead of Australia, with India slipping four points behind the host nation.

India now face a must-win game against Australia in Sydney on Sunday.

Jayawardene looked set for a well-deserved century, the second in the match, before he was stumped by Matthew Wade well out of his crease after being deceived by a beautiful delivery from spinner Xavier Doherty in the 27th over.

Chandimal was out leg before wicket to Ryan Harris as he walked across the stumps to a straight ball and tried to dink it square, leaving the visitors on 243 for five in the 45th over.

Dan Christian finished the best of Australia's bowlers with three for 53 off eight overs, although Perera clouted him for four and six off successive deliveries in the penultimate over.

Earlier, Forrest, slotting comfortably into deposed Ricky Ponting's number three batting spot, smashed 104 off 138 balls.

Forrest hit 10 fours and two sixes to take his tournament tally to 234 runs in four innings since his unexpected selection for the tri-series.

His hundred was his not only his first for Australia but also in any one-day match.

He brought up his century by dropping the ball into the off-side and darting for a quick single, before celebrating with fist-pumps.

He combined in a 154-run third-wicket partnership with skipper Michael Clarke (72) after the loss of openers Matthew Wade (5) and David Warner (7) for just 27 runs.

Forrest looked at ease against the Sri Lankan bowling before holing out in the 41st over to deep cover off Angelo Mathews.

Clarke, in his first match back since hamstring-related trouble, struggled throughout with a stiff back in his 79-ball knock with five fours and two sixes.

The Australian skipper was out to a stunning catch by Perera in the 39th over for Mathews' second wicket of the innings.

David Hussey remained unbeaten on 40 off 28 balls and paceman Brett Lee 20 not out with Mike Hussey out five overs from the end of the innings to a crashing yorker from Lasith Malinga for 21 off 14 balls.

Australia, who won the toss, left out fit-again all-rounder Shane Watson and paceman Clint McKay, while the Sri Lankans named an unchanged side.

SCOREBOARD

AUSTRALIA				
Warner c Sangakkara b Maharoof	7			
Wade c Jayawardene b Kulasekara	5			
Forrest c Maharoof b Mathews	104			
Clarke c Perera b Mathews	72			
M Hussey b Malinga	21			
D Hussey not out	40			
Christian st Sangakkara b Herath	6			
Lee not out	20			
Extras: (b-1, lb-1, w-3)	5			
Total: (For 6 wkts in 50 overs)	280			
Did not bat: Harris, Doherty, Hilfenhaus.				
Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-27, 3-181, 4-201, 5-243, 6-250.				

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Malinga	10	0	56	1
Kulasekara	10	0	59	1
Maharoof	10	0	40	1
Herath	9	0	45	1
Mathews	7	0	43	2
Perera	4	0	35	0

SRI LANKA				
Jayawardene st Wade b Doherty	85			
Dilshan c Forrest b Hilfenhaus	3			
Sangakkara c Warner b Christian	22			
Chandimal lbw b Harris	80			
Thirimanne c Hilfenhaus b Christian	24			
Mathews c Warner b Christian	24			
Maharoof c Harris b Hilfenhaus	5			
Perera not out	21			
Kulasekara not out	4			
Extras: (b-1, lb-6, w-8)	15			
Total: (For 7 wkts in 49.2 overs)	283			
Did not bat: Malinga, Herath.				
Fall of wickets: 1-55, 2-90, 3-153, 4-202, 5-243, 6-250, 7-267.				

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Lee	9.2	0	63	0
Hilfenhaus	10	0	51	2
Harris	6	0	43	1
Christian	8	0	53	3
Doherty	10	1	35	1
Clarke	5	0	27	0
D Hussey	1	0	4	0

Result: Sri Lanka won by 3 wickets.
Man-of-the-match: Mahela Jayawardene.

Pakistan ride on Gul

Cricket

AFP, Dubai

Paceman Umar Gul took 3-18 to inspire Pakistan to a thrilling eight-run win in the first of three Twenty20 internationals against England at Dubai Stadium on Thursday.

England, the reigning Twenty20 world champions, were cruising at 120-4 after 17 overs, chasing 145 to win, but Gul took two wickets in the 18th over for just three runs to change the complexion of the game, eventually restricting England to 136-6.

Graeme Swann rocked the middle-order with a burst of three wickets off eight balls to restrict Pakistan, put into bat, to 144-6 with Shoaib Malik making 39.

Ravi Bopara (39) and Jonny Bairstow (22 not out) had added 33 for the fourth wicket but Gul dismissed Bopara with the fifth ball of the 16th over and then had Jos Butler (three) and Samit Patel (nought) in the next to bring Pakistan closer to victory.

With 18 needed off the final over bowled by Junaid Khan, England managed just nine.

England were set on the chase by Kevin Pietersen (33) as they reached 48 by the sixth over but Pakistan came back when Shahid Afridi dismissed the in-form Pietersen.

Pietersen, who made back-to-back hundreds in England's 4-0 win in the preceding one-day series, holed out to Shafiq.

Off-spinner Mohammad Hafeez, who finished with 2-18, chipped in with the wickets of Craig Kieswetter (14) and dangerous looking Eoin Morgan (14) to leave England at 80-3, a position from where they should have won but

Gul's spirited bowling made the difference.

Pakistan captain Misbahul Haq said the win was pleasing after being routed in one-dayers.

England captain Stuart Broad said his team lost wickets at crucial times.

Pakistan too made a flying start with debutant Awaiz Zia hitting a four and six during his 12-ball 18 but Pakistan lost four wickets in the space of eight runs as Asad Shafiq (19) fell run out, Mohammad Hafeez (23), Shahid Afridi (seven) and Umar Akmal (nought) followed each other, with Swann taking the last three.

It was left to Misbah (26 not out) and Malik (39) to put on 71 for the sixth wicket to take Pakistan to a respectable total.

Malik hit four boundaries and six off 33 balls before he fell to a superb catch by Bairstow off Jade Dernbach off the last ball of the innings.

Misbah gave Malik good support during his run-a-ball innings, hitting one four and a six. Swann finished with 3-13.

Pakistan brought in Zia and all-rounder Hammad Azam while Bopara and Swann returned for England after missing the fourth one-dayer due to fitness problems.

The second match will be played here on Saturday, while the final match is in Abu Dhabi on February 27.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: 144 for 6 (Hafeez 23, Zia 18, Shafiq 19, Misbah 26 not out, Malik 39; Swann 3-13)
ENGLAND: 136 for 6 (Pietersen 33, Bopara 39, Bairstow 22 not out; Gul 3-18, Hafeez 2-18)
Result: Pakistan won by eight runs.
Man-of-the-match: Umal Gul.



PHOTO: AFP

Russia's Yelena Isinbayeva celebrates breaking the high-jump record at 5.01 metres in the XL Galan Stockholm Indoor meet in Stockholm on Thursday.

Have patience: Misbah

Cricket

AFP, Dubai

Pakistan captain Misbahul Haq on Friday hit back at criticism after his side's 4-0 defeat in the one-day series against England, urging a change of mindset among detractors.

"I have said that even after the Test series win that we have to keep patience," said Misbah following his team's eight-run win in the first of three Twenty20 internationals against England on Thursday.

Pakistan routed England in the three-Tests 3-0 but suffered a 4-0 reverse in the following one-day series,

prompting former cricketing greats and media commentators to call for changes in the team and captaincy.

"We should talk of the ground realities but we talk on other points," said Misbah in response. "We should talk of the bad performance (and) the areas where we showed weaknesses.

"We must talk of ground realities and the media should be positive. We committed mistakes: they scored four hundreds, we managed only four fifties and their bowlers took wickets, ours didn't," said Misbah of the one-day series.

The Pakistan skipper said the country had underperformed in the past

because of such a response to defeats, insisting that his side had not become bad players overnight just because of the loss of the one-day series.

"We have to change this thinking if we are to lift Pakistan cricket," he said, calling for a more reasoned debate about strengths and weaknesses rather than a potentially counter-productive knee-jerk response to change personnel.

Misbah has not lost a Test series since taking over the Pakistan captaincy in October 2010 and the defeat against England was his first since taking charge as one-day captain in June last year.

Pakistan had won the preceding two one-day series before he took over.

"Drastic changes will not help. These same players won us the last six series. Now if, on one defeat against a top team, we change players and captains then we could change six captains till the 2015 World Cup," he said.

"That can never bring improvement in Pakistan team."

Misbah said he hoped Pakistan will carry the momentum in the next two Twenty20 matches, which take place in Dubai on Saturday and Abu Dhabi on Monday.

"England is a good team and can come back strongly, so we have guard against complacency and do our best," he added.

Rashed breaks

FROM PAGE 16
The Chittagong DSA lodged a complaint with the appeal board headed by BAF president ASM Ali Kabir while other participating districts are planning to boycott the meet.

Meanwhile on the first day, a total of 11 events were decided with Bangladesh Army leading the medals tally with seven gold, five silver and two bronze while BJMC were in second position with two gold, a silver and a bronze.

Earlier in the morning, Communications Minister Obaidul Kader inaugurated the three-day meet as the chief guest.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Players and officials of HS Blossom pose with the trophy after beating Operation Legends in the final of a six-a-side inter-department cricket tournament of Apollo Hospitals at the Udayachal Club playground in Mohammadpur yesterday.