

Star SPORT

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'I'd never drop Sehwaq'

Former Pakistan captain Ramiz Raja, in an interview on Saturday, weighed in on India's Virender Sehwaq issue. The explosive right-hander was dropped from the team for India's first ICC World Twenty20 Super Eights match, which they lost by nine wickets.

"I'd never drop Sehwaq, who is such an impact batsman. Also, why unsettle the Sehwaq-(Gautam) Gambhir pair? Sehwaq's form can get frustrating, but the guy has loads of talent and the ability to play for 15 overs or so... Why waste him in the dressing room? Whether India should field three specialist spinners is another matter



Watto alone suffices

REUTERS, Colombo

Shane Watson continued his impressive form with both bat and ball as Australia cruised to a comprehensive eight-wicket victory against South Africa in their Super Eights match in the World Twenty20 on Sunday.

Watson picked up two wickets for 29 with the ball and then cracked 70 off just 47 balls for his fourth consecutive player-of-the-match award in as many matches in the tournament.

Chasing 147 for victory, Australia lost opener David Warner early but Watson snubbed South Africa's hopes of victory with a 99-run stand for the second wicket with left-hander Mike Hussey (45 not out).

The all-rounder, who is now both the highest scorer and wicket-taker in the tournament, hit eight boundaries and two massive sixes during his knock before he was out caught by Wayne Parnell off left-arm spinner Robin Peterson.

"It's nice to be able to continue to play well. I know how important my role is. There's still a hell of a long way to go," Watson said during the post-match presentation ceremony.

"Facing Dale Steyn and Morne Morkel was always going to be a big challenge. I knew we have to get through it without getting out, scoring as many runs as we can.

"The top four batsmen are the ones who win you games consistently. [Mike] Hussey took the pressure off me to score."

Peterson was unlucky when Parnell dropped a difficult catch off his bowling to

dismiss Watson when he was on 52. Captain and wicketkeeper AB de Villiers also missed a stumping chance to dismiss Hussey off the same bowler.

Australia's left-arm spinner Xavier Doherty, playing his first match of the tournament, picked up three wickets for 20 to put South Africa on the back-foot after Australia had opted to field first.

Doherty dismissed opener Richard Levi and Jacques Kallis in his first two overs and later took the wicket of Jean-Paul Duminy (30) as South Africa struggled for momentum.

Peterson (32 not out) and Farhaan Behardien (31 not out) added 60 runs for the unbroken sixth wicket to help their team reach 146 for five.

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South Africa captain de Villiers said his side needed early wickets, especially that of Watson to defend the total.

"You got to get wickets if you want to win Twenty20 games like they [Australia] did early on. They got wickets and put pressure on a regular basis, but we couldn't do that," de Villiers told reporters.

"If you don't get Watson early on, he is going to take away the game, that's what exactly happened.

"It was really hard to control the game against him and when Hussey came in, it was two different players, right and left hand combination, it was quite tough.

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Australia superstar Shane Watson pulls one for four during his whirlwind knock of 70 off 47 balls in their World Twenty20 match against South Africa at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

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Indo-Pak clash stirs Lankan passion

BISHWAJIT ROY from Colombo

At noon when the media bus started its trip from the Sinhalese Sports Club, the headquarters of Sri Lanka Cricket, towards R Premadasa International Cricket Stadium, the city streets were almost deserted as Sunday is the weekly holiday in the country. And that was why it took only ten minutes to reach the destination, which is not the case on regular office days.

The surrounding areas of the stadium also gave the impression of being a tranquil place at that time. But the scenario changed quickly as cricket-crazy fans started to arrive in their numbers mainly to watch the high-voltage

India-Pakistan match. It seemed that all roads truly lead to the stadium; which was the brainchild of the late Sri Lanka President Ranasinghe Premadasa who made this colossal 35,000-seater stadium. The fans started to come to the ground well before the start of the match, called a 'final before the final' of the ongoing ICC World Twenty20, and there was a festive mood in and outside of the bowl.

The Sri Lankan love for cricket is world-renowned and to understand it you have to be at a stadium where a match is being played, feel the rhythm of the fans as they form impromptu bands and play music, eat and drink and of course cheer; a Sri Lanka-style enjoyment. The presence of the home team always sees the stadium full to its brim

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BD A suffer 53-run loss

SPORTS REPORTER

It was a combination of some good left-arm bowling that demolished the Bangladeshi A batting lineup and helped the visiting West Indies High Performance team take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match one-day series. Promising young pacer Sheldon Cotterrell and slow-left arm bowler Verasammy Permaul shared 8 wickets as the visitors bowled the hosts out for a mere 181 runs at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday and romped to a 53-run victory.

Chasing a target of 234, Bangladesh A slumped to trouble early in the game when discarded national opener Imrul Kayes who had scored a half-century in the previous game was caught off Cotterrell in the very first over. Anamul Haque followed suit as he became the left-hander's second victim of the day when the wicketkeeper-batsman was caught while playing a rash shot in the third over.

Shahriar Nafees and

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FED CUP DRAW HELD Easy passage for big guns

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Big-spenders Sheikh Russel KC have been placed in Group A along with ten-time champions Mohammedan SC as the draw of the 24th Federation Cup was held yesterday at the Bangladesh Football Federation.

Holders Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club, runners-up Team BJMC and title contenders Abahani have avoided each other in the group phase clashes as they were placed in different groups on the basis of the standings of the fifth edition of the professional football league instead of last season's Federation Cup standings.

The tournament will kick off with the match between Mohammedan and Rampur Boys Club of Feni followed by

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IND v PAK SCOREBOARD

PAKISTAN	R	B	4	6
Hafeez b Kohli	15	28	1	0
Nazir lbw b Pathan	8	5	2	0
Afridi c Raina b Balaji	14	12	2	0
Jamshed c Dhoni b Yuvraj	4	5	0	0
Kamran c Dhoni b Yuvraj	5	6	0	0
Malik c Sharma b Ashwin	28	22	3	0
Umar c Raina b Ashwin	21	18	0	0
Yasir run out	8	11	1	0
Gul c Dhoni b Balaji	12	10	1	0
Ajmal c Dhoni b Balaji	1	2	0	0
Raza not out	0	0	0	0
Extras: (lb-1, w-10, nb-1)	12			
Total: (All out in 19.4 overs)	128			
Fall of wickets: 1-17, 2-35, 3-43, 4-49, 5-59, 6-106, 7-115, 8-115, 9-128				

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Bowler	O	M	R	W
Zaheer	3	0	22	0
Irfan	3	0	30	1
Balaji	3.4	0	22	3
Ashwin	4	0	16	2
Yuvraj	3	0	16	2
Kohli	3	0	21	1
INDIA	R	B	4	6
Gambhir c & b Raza	0	2	0	0
Sehwaq c Gul b Afridi	29	24	4	0
Kohli not out	78	61	8	2
Yuvraj not out	19	16	2	0
Extras: (w-2, nb-1)	3			
Total: (For 2 wickets in 17 overs)	129			
Did not bat: Raina, Sharma, Dhoni, Pathan, Ashwin, Zaheer, Balaji				
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-75				

Siddikur finishes 18th

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman finished joint 18th in the Mercuries Taiwan Masters with an aggregate score of 7-over-par (295) at the end of the fourth round yesterday. The 27-year old slipped from his overnight fifth position, thanks to a horrendous fourth round score of 6-over-par (78) at the Taiwan Golf and Country Club on Sunday.

The 2010 runner-up had a decent first three days when

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ICC WORLD T20 TODAY'S MATCHES

MATCH	TIME	VENUE
West Indies v New Zealand	4:00pm	Pallekele
England v Sri Lanka	8:00pm	Pallekele