

SPOT-FIXING

## Asif's appeal turned down

AFP, London

Three Court of Appeal judges in London on Wednesday rejected an appeal by Pakistan cricketer Mohammad Asif against his conviction for spot-fixing.

In their ruling, the judges said they were "not persuaded that there are any grounds, arguable or otherwise, for attacking the safety of the convictions of this applicant (Asif)".

"The renewed applications are accordingly dismissed," they added.

Fast bowler Asif, 30, was released from jail in May last year after serving half of a 12-month sentence for his part in a plot to bowl deliberate no-balls in a Test match against England at Lord's in 2010.

Former captain Salman Butt was jailed for 30 months, while promising young bowler Mohammad Aamer was detained for six months in a young offenders' institution.

# Rain shrinks Aus hopes

AFP, Birmingham



Rain frustrated defending champions Australia as their Champions Trophy match against New Zealand ended in a no result leaving them with a tough battle to qualify for the semifinals.

New Zealand, chasing 244 to win, were on 51 for two off 15 overs when rain stopped play in the Group A clash at 3.40pm local time.

Under the Duckworth/Lewis system for rain-affected matches, a minimum of 20 overs had to be bowled in the second innings for either side to win this fixture.

But at 6.25pm (1725GMT), the umpires decided no further play was possible.

The first no result of the tournament saw both sides take a point apiece.

That left New Zealand with three points after their one-wicket win over Sri Lanka and gave Australia their first point of this event after a 48-run loss to hosts England at Edgbaston last week.

Adam Voges top-scored with 71 in a total of 243 for eight with George Bailey, Australia's stand-in cap-

tain, making 55 after winning the toss.

New Zealand left-arm quick Mitchell McClenaghan took four for 65.

Australia collapsed to 10 for two in as Shane Watson was caught behind off McClenaghan and Phillip Hughes was run out for nought by Martin Guptill, racing in from cover.

But coming in at 10 for two, Bailey calmly repaired the early damage.

New Zealand off-spinner Nathan McCullum (two for 46) checked Australia's progress with the wickets of Matthew Wade and Bailey.

Voges fell when he holed out off McClenaghan.

But Glenn Maxwell, brought in for Warner, added late impetus with an unbeaten 29 off just 22 balls including two sixes and a four.

The Black Caps' reply started in fine style when Luke Ronchi, a former Australia international now playing for his native New Zealand, drove Mitchell Johnson through the covers for four.

But New Zealand were soon 26 for two as Clint McKay had Guptill caught at point and Ronchi taken atully.

Kane Williamson was 18 not out and Ross Taylor unbeaten on nine when the match was halted.

New Zealand conclude their group programme against England in Cardiff on Sunday, with Australia facing Sri Lanka at The Oval on Monday.

## SCOREBOARD

<b>AUSTRALIA</b>				
Watson c Ronchi b McClenaghan	5			
Wade lbw b N McCullum	29			
Hughes run out (Guptill)	0			
Bailey b N McCullum	55			
Voges c B McCullum b McClenaghan	71			
Marsh c Ronchi b McClenaghan	22			
Maxwell not out	29			
Faulkner c McClenaghan b Williamson	6			
Johnson c B McCullum b McClenaghan	8			
McKay not out	2			
Extras: (b-1, lb-7, w-4, nb-4)	16			
Total: (For 8 wkts in 50 overs)	243			
Did not bat: Doherty				
Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-10, 3-74, 4-151, 5-193, 6-196, 7-210, 8-219				
<b>Bowler</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>W</b>
Mills	6	1	19	0
McClenaghan	10	0	65	4
Vettori	10	1	23	0
Southee	4	1	26	0
N McCullum	10	0	46	2
Williamson	10	0	56	1
<b>NEW ZEALAND</b>				
Ronchi c Watson b McKay	14			
Guptill c Maxwell b McKay	8			
Williamson not out	18			
Taylor not out	9			
Extras: (lb-1, w-1)	2			
Total: (For 2 wkts in 15 overs)	51			
Fall of wickets: 1-18, 2-26				
<b>Bowler</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>W</b>
Johnson	4	0	18	0
McKay	4	0	10	2
Watson	3	1	11	0
Faulkner	3	0	7	0
Doherty	1	0	4	0

FIXING IN IPL

## Sree hopes to return

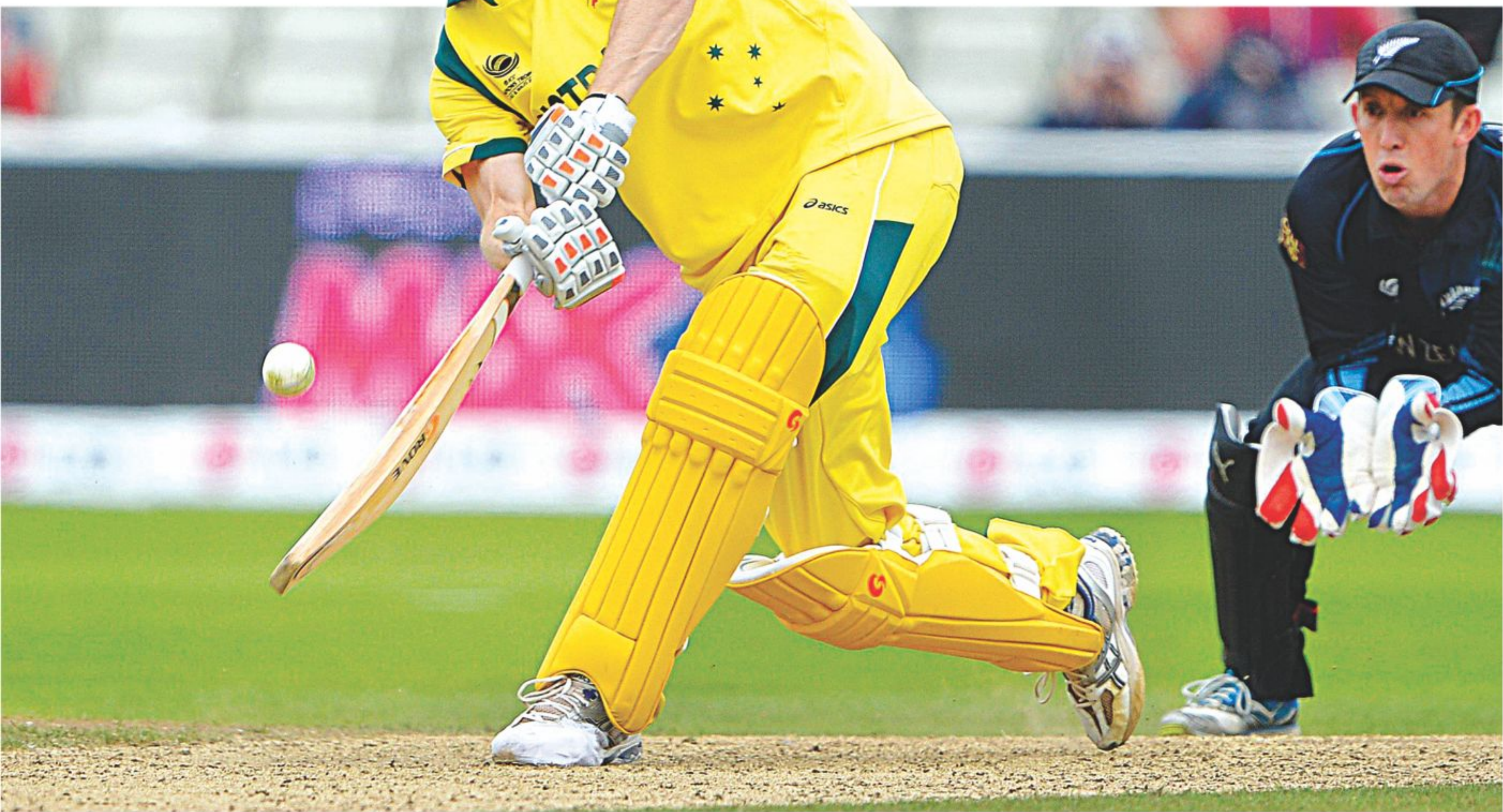
AFP, New Delhi

Indian Test bowler Shanthakumaran Sreesanth still hopes to represent his country again despite his arrest over a spot-fixing scandal, a report said on Wednesday.

Sreesanth and two of his Rajasthan Royals teammates were arrested last month over accusations they deliberately bowled badly during Indian Premier League matches in exchange for tens of thousands of dollars.

But Sreesanth, who was granted bail at a court appearance in New Delhi on Tuesday, is not only insisting that he is innocent but is vowing to regain his place in the national side.

"I have not been stopped from training so I want to ensure that I stay fit and give myself the best possible chance to represent the country again," the Indian Express quoted Sreesanth as saying after he was bailed.



Australia's Adam Voges hits one over the top on way to making a stroke-filled 71 off 76 balls against New Zealand in their Champions Trophy clash at Edgbaston on Wednesday. Voges' efforts though went in vain as rain intervened to put an abrupt end to the game, leaving both sides sharing a point each.

PHOTO: AFP

# BCB at a loss with BPL?

SPORTS REPORTER

With the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20 franchises not paying heed to any of the deadlines set by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), the board at the moment seems to be clueless regarding the next approach to be taken against the franchises.

BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon already termed the cash-rich T20 tournament as a pain for his board. The non-payment issue has become a headache for the authority since the tournament's inception last year, with the recent match-fixing allegation surrounding the BPL making things worse. Everybody was looking forward to the findings and recommendation from the ICC's ACSU (Anti-Corruption and Security Unit) regarding some franchises but it is high time for the board to take action on some other pressing issues like the BPL non-payment.

The board had recently served notice to the franchises asking them to clear all the dues but only two replied requesting the board to consider some extenuating factors before the deadline was over.

"Actually the current developments with the ACSU investigation have halted our activities. But the reality is that there has not been any progress regarding the franchises' non-payment. The BPL governing council meeting is going to take place very soon where we will take our decision and communicate it to the BCB in the next board meeting. But one thing is certain -- we will not hesitate to terminate any franchise," said BPL governing council secretary IH Mallick yesterday.

BCB acting CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury also seemed unclear about the board's next course of action against the franchises. "As far as I know another deadline (the aforementioned notice served for the franchises to clear their dues) has been neglected. Two franchises replied to our notice where they requested for some leeway. You know we have already started the legal procedure and we now have to go for legal arbitration. Let's see what happens," said Chowdhury.

Many in the board however were skeptical about whether they can reach any conclusion regarding the franchises and whether the third version of the tournament can indeed be held with a clean slate.

# WARNER dropped

AFP, Birmingham



Australia batsman David Warner was dropped for the country's Champions Trophy match against New Zealand on Wednesday, Cricket Australia said, after a bar-room attack on England's Joe Root.

Cricket Australia said the player had been reported for breaching its code of conduct relating to "unbecoming behaviour" after a "physical altercation" with an unnamed player after the two teams' Champions Trophy on Sunday.

England captain Alastair Cook later confirmed the identity of the player involved as Yorkshire batsman Root.

"Joe seems fine," Cook told a news conference ahead of England's next match against Sri Lanka at The Oval on Thursday, adding that he was disappointed by the incident.

"It's unfortunate this has happened and he wants to put it behind him. We have investigated the matter, we believe we have not done anything wrong."

Cook added: "He (Root) seems fine. He is training well. He just wants to get the matter buried. He is an excellent young man."

"It was not an official ICC function. I was not there, so I am also hearing it second hand. But a couple of our players were there."

Britain's Sky Sports News television quoted the manager of the Australian theme bar Walkabout in Birmingham's entertainment district, where the incident took place, as saying that players from both sides were there between 1:30am (0030 GMT) and 2:30am.

## Siddikur looking to go one better

SPORTS REPORTER



As the 312,000-dollar Queen's Cup gets underway at the Thai holiday isle of Koh Samui today, Siddikur Rahman will be looking go one better than his last year's performance when he finished second. The 28-year old golfer will have to deal with Thaworn Wiratchant of Thailand, whom he lost against by three shots last year. Also in contention will be Asian Tour Order of Merit leader Kiradech Aphibarnrat of Thailand, India's rising star Anirban Lahiri and Mardan Mamat of Singapore.

"I was almost there but just couldn't finish it off. I remembered taking the lead at one stage but just messed it up on the greens," said Siddikur of his near-miss last year in his blog at the Asiantour.com website recently. "Hopefully it will not happen again this year as I'm ready to go out there and compete again."

Siddikur said he felt fresh after having a break of almost two months and was happy about the fact that he got a new sponsor.

"I had a long break and while it gave me time to practice, I also managed to find a new sponsor. It's a new domestic airline from Bangladesh and it's called Novoir. They are going to start their international flights very soon and I'm very happy to have them as my sponsor," said Siddikur.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh will have another representative in the Queen's Cup in the form of Zamal Hossain Mollah.

## Abahani's last chance

SPORTS REPORTER



Reigning champions Abahani want to put their miserable season behind by defending the Super Cup while Muktiyoddha Sangsad are looking forward to securing a final spot in the money-spinning tournament, which kicks off on Friday when Abahani and Muktiyoddha play the day's second match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Four-time professional league champions, Abahani had a disastrous season after being eliminated from the group stages of the Federation Cup and the Independence Cup and finishing distant third in the Bangladesh Premier League.

The popular Sky Blue outfit even failed to qualify for the second phase of AFC President's Cup in their fourth attempt, but they are getting another chance to redeem themselves by winning the Super Cup.

"Abahani were about to end the season empty handed. The Super Cup though comes as an opportunity to prove ourselves and go home with at least a crown," said Abahani manager Satyajit Das Rupu at the official press briefing at the BFF House yesterday.

Despite leading the league table in the premier league at one stage, Abahani went on the backfoot as the squad was ravaged

with injuries. They even had to take extreme measures by playing a striker as a stopper in the latter part of the league. In the end they slipped away from the title race and finished third.

"All the players are matchfit at the moment. If they can play to their potential, Abahani will be able to reach its destination and retain the Super Cup," said Rupu, who was however a bit worried about his strikers.

On the other hand, Muktiyoddha Sangsad are dreaming big as their tournament luck is better than the league. Muktiyoddha Sangsad reached the semifinals in both the Federation Cup and the Independence Cup but finished sixth in league table.

"We lost against giants like Sheikh Russel and Sheikh Jamal in the Federation Cup and Independence Cup semifinals by nominal margin but our performance on the pitch was better than them," said Muktiyoddha Sangsad coach Shafiqul Islam Manik. "If the boys can transfer that performance to the Super Cup, I think it will not be impossible to play in the final."

However, Muktiyoddha Sangsad will lack the cutting edge as they will have to field irregular strikers like Mohammad Biplob, Mohammad Rony and Rokonzaman Kanchan in place of foreign striking duo of Darlington and Thiago Silva. Besides, Manik will have the added job of motivating his players who have been unpaid for few months.



SATYAJIT DAS RUPU



PHOTO: AFP

Australia's opening batsman David Warner carries water bottles for his teammates during the match against New Zealand yesterday after he was dropped from the team for an "unprovoked physical attack" on England's Joe Root.