

SPORT



When the Australia series gets underway in late August Imrul Kayes (R) will continue to be unsure about his place in the team as well as his position in the batting order, but that hardly deterred him as he turned up to Mirpur yesterday along with Test skipper Mushfiqur Rahim for practice even though the training camp starts from July 10.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

C'WEALTH CHESS C'SHIP Fahad, Jannatul share leads

SPORTS REPORTER

FIDE Master Mohammad Fahad Rahman and Jannatul Ferdous shared the leads in their respective age groups at the close of the second round of the Commonwealth Chess Championship in New Delhi yesterday.

Fahad beat Indian Aan Sikka in the U-14 group and Jannat beat Sri Lankan Wickramasinghe Thesandi in the U-12 girls' group and secured the full two points from as many matches while Nayem Haque, Tahsin Tajwar Zia and Md. Sajidul Haque earned 1.5 points each from two matches in their respective groups.

Meanwhile, GM Mollah Abdullah Al Rakib, GM Niaz Mursheed, FM Md Taibur Rahman and WIM Shamima Akter Liza won their first round games while GM Ziaur Rahman, GM Enamul Hossain Razib, WIM Rani Hamid, WFM Sharmin Sultana lost their first-round matches in the Open Section on Monday. They were scheduled to play their second-round matches last night.

GM Rakib beat Indian Sumit Grover, GM Niaz beat Indian WCM Isha Sharma, FM Taibur defeated Indian Harikrishnan Kottayam, WIM Liza thumped Indian Lakshaya Arora. On the other hand, GM Ziaur lost to Indian Kumar Gaurav, GM Enamul lost to Indian Rohit Vassan, WIM Rani was defeated by Indian GM Abhijit Kunte and WFM Sharmin lost to Indian GM Swapnil Dhopade.

Sarfraz to lead Pak in all formats

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan Tuesday rewarded Sarfraz Ahmed with the country's Test captaincy, a fortnight after he led the national team to an elusive Champions Trophy title in England.

Underdogs Pakistan trounced India by a record 180-run margin in the final in London on June 18 to lift the Champions Trophy, to the shock and ecstasy of the cricket-mad country.

Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Shaharyar Khan named Sarfraz Test captain at a ceremony honouring the winning team hosted by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in Islamabad on Tuesday.

"I take this opportunity to announce Ahmed as our Test captain in addition to one-day and Twenty20 captain," Khan said.

The 30-year-old will lead Pakistan in the three-match Test series against Sri Lanka, likely to be held on the neutral venue of the United Arab Emirates in October.

Ahmed has already led Pakistan in nine one-day internationals since last year, winning seven and losing two. He has also led in eight Twenty20s, winning seven and losing just one.

The Test captaincy has been vacant since Misbahul Haq retired after winning a three-match Test series 2-1 in the West Indies in May this year.

Ahmed said leading Pakistan in all three formats is a great honour.

"I am honoured to be appointed Test captain," he said during the ceremony. "I will do my best to lift the team in all three formats and will not rest on Champions Trophy laurels."

Younis under fire for sexist remark

SMH

Australia's female cricketers have hit back at Waqar Younis's suggestion that 50-over matches are too long for the women's game, with all-rounder Jess Jonassen labelling the remarks "offensive" and "misguided".

Younis last week tweeted the ICC, proposing women's ODI games be reduced to 30 overs apiece, likening his alternative format to a tennis grand slam where women only play a best of three sets as opposed to the five played by their male counterparts.

Wicketkeeper Alyssa Healy was quick to rebut the retired Pakistan paceman, and replied "So what you're saying is that 530 runs in a 50-over game isn't entertaining? With two of the best innings anyone has seen...."

Healy was referring to Australia's win over Sri Lanka in Bristol where Chamari Atapattu crunched an unbeaten 178 only for Meg Lanning to produce 152 not out as her side chased down 9-257.

Younis, 45, has since clarified his original comments, saying "Lesser overs mean faster pace, more audience, competitive cricket, no discrimination or prejudice toward women."

"It is a little bit offensive, what's T20 cricket for," Jonassen said. "It's quite interesting that he said it the day after our match against Sri Lanka that was one of the highest scoring games of the World Cup so far. Five hundred odd runs scored and two of the best innings of the women's game ever."

"I think [it's] maybe a little bit misguided. The interest level [in women's cricket] grown immensely over the last 12 to 18 months especially."

AUSTRALIA PAY DISPUTE

'Extend MoU by a year'

REUTERS, Sydney

Australia's cricketers and board should extend their previous agreement by 12 months while they attempt to find a solution to a bitter pay dispute, former captain Michael Clarke said on Tuesday.

The previous Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) expired at midnight on Friday with no sign of a deal in place, leaving around 230 leading cricketers without contracts and the fate of future tours in limbo.

Once the deadline passed, Australia's players threatened to boycott an "A" team tour of South Africa later this month unless a new agreement was struck with Cricket Australia beforehand.

"What needs to happen is keep the current MoU for the next 12 months and allow the players to get back to what they do best," Clarke told reporters at Nine Network's marketing launch for the Ashes.

"Cricket Australia, the ACA (Australian Cricketers' Association), please go behind closed doors and sort this in private."

"The players want to play... let's allow them to play while this stuff gets sorted out in the background."

At the heart of the acrimonious dispute is Cricket Australia's (CA) insistence that the two-decade-old model, under which players get a fixed percentage of revenue, should be jettisoned.

CA believes the revenue-share model is unfit for modern times and is starving grass-roots cricket of funding, while players say it has underpinned the game's growth and prosperity over the past 20 years.

"I don't want the Australian players

to be unprepared because they have been concentrating on something else; give them 12 months and let them concentrate on the cricket," Clarke said. "I don't want to see any cricket missed."

"There will be a compromise. The ACA and Cricket Australia will find a way to make this work."

The ACA has called on CA chief executive James Sutherland to come to the negotiating table but he has remained silent since emailing players in May, informing them they would be unemployed if they failed to agree to a new MoU by the June 30 deadline.

"It does seem very strange. You've got to wonder what the hell is going on," former Australia captain Ian Chappell said.

"Because they won't want to cancel that. If they get something done then, people will have probably forgotten by the time the Ashes start in November."

"I can't believe they (CA) will want to upset India, so I would have thought that something will happen before," he said.

"We have to have the attitude as if we are going to be travelling."

"The pay row also threatens to derail upcoming Australia tours to Bangladesh and India as well as this year's prestige home Ashes series against England."

Cricket Australia's national talent manager Greg Chappell told reporters that he remained optimistic that a swift solution could be found.

"I'm expecting that we will see a positive resolution in the not too distant future and we will get back to focusing on the cricket," he said Tuesday.



Australia A captain Usman Khawaja takes part in a training session at Allan Border Field in Brisbane yesterday ahead of their tour of South Africa, despite the threat to boycott the trip because of a bitter pay dispute.

PHOTO: AFP

SL selectors given 6-month extension

CRICINFO, Colombo

The selection committee headed by Sanath Jayasuriya will remain in position for a further six months, SLC has confirmed. This means that by the end of 2017, Jayasuriya will have served as chief selector for more than three-and-a-half of the previous five years.

Asanka Gurusinha, SLC's cricket manager, continues in the committee, with former players Romesh Kaluwitharana, Ranjith Madurasinghe and Eric Upashantha also staying.

The panel's reappointment comes despite recent criticism that its selection policy has been inconsistent. 38 players have been fielded in Sri Lanka's 30 ODIs since the panel's appointment in May last year, and the team has only won nine of those games, losing 17.

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Proteas look for gutsy attitude from Elgar

REUTERS, London

South Africa are backing Dean Elgar to bring a 'gutsy attitude' with him when he stands in as captain for the first Test against England, starting at Lord's on Thursday.

"Dean is an aggressive type of personality and he will play an aggressive brand of cricket. He is an experienced player in the Test side and has had good success as a Test opener. That is a tough job in this game," coach Russell Domingo told a news conference on Monday.

"He is a gutsy player. He epitomises South African cricket to the tee. I'm excited about working with him for the next couple of days as captain."

Elgar, who becomes the 12th player to captain

South Africa since their readmission to international cricket 25 years ago, stands in for Faf du Plessis, who misses the first Test to be with his wife Imari after the birth of their first child.

"He is going to try and take over and run with a lot of what Faf has instilled in the side, but be his own man," added Domingo.

"I'm excited to see what he brings. It's a big plus for us that we can have another prospective captain in the group."

"We want to win, that is the bottom line. We set ourselves certain goals a year ago that we want to achieve in test cricket and we are determined to tick those boxes."

Team manager Mohammed Moosajee said earlier that du Plessis had remained with his wife because the birth had been a difficult one, but that he was likely to fly to Britain later in the week.

'Captaincy will lift Root to new level'

AFP, London

England fast bowler Stuart Broad believes captaincy will take star batsman Joe Root's game to the "next level".

Root was named as the successor to Alastair Cook in February, but Thursday's series opener against South Africa at Lord's will be the Yorkshireman's first match as England Test captain.

Test captaincy appears to have boosted the performances of such leading current batsmen as India's Steve Smith and New Zealand's Kane Williamson, with Broad confident it will inspire Root to greater heights rather be too heavy a burden for the 26-year-old.

"Joe's not had a huge amount of captaincy experience because he played for England from a young age but he's learned the game at the top level," Broad told Sky Sports News at Lord's on Tuesday. "I think it will take his game to the next level, if he can go any higher. He'll really thrive off the extra responsibility."

"He's an attacking cricketer, quite aggressive in the way he plays, so I think the team will take that sort of shape," added Broad. "He was announced a long time ago and now he has the chance to put things into place."

PHOTO: AFP