



'WE PLAYED MORE CRICKET THAN THIS GENERATION'
There is a feeling in cricketing fraternity that a choc-a-bloc international calendar comprising three formats leave youngsters with very little time to work on their game. However the legendary Shane Warne believes otherwise at a time when workload management has been the buzzword in many countries including India. "We played more cricket than this generation. We played more days of cricket, even though it was first-class cricket. What's the complication nowadays is the travel and different formats that they have to adjust to. But in terms of pure balls bowled and days played, yesteryears' players used to play more," Warne said. Warne then cited an example of his playing days for Australia, Victoria and Hampshire. "There used to be a Sheffield Shield game for Victoria, then a Test match and we would again go back and play for Victoria. Now they have breaks, they have got Big Bash, so that's a fact," said Warne, who bowled an astounding 92,797 legal deliveries in senior level cricket and took 1862 wickets.

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THUMBNAILS

Bangladesh players return home: Having narrowly escaped a terror attack in a mosque that claimed 49 lives, a traumatised Bangladesh cricket team returned home with players stating that it will take some time for the normalcy to return. According to Bangladesh's leading newspaper 'Daily Star', Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan said that as the players had gone through such a traumatic experience, they required a break from cricket. "He advised that the players spend time with their families and try not to relive the memories from that day - when the players were warned against entering the Masjid Al Noor by passers-by and quickly got away from the scene of a gruesome attack that has claimed 49 lives," the newspaper reported. Bangladesh's senior opener Tamim Iqbal admitted that it would take some time before they can return to the field. "What we faced here, it will take some time for us to get over what we suffered," Tamim said before boarding the flight for Bangladesh.

Afghanistan close to maiden Test win: Spinner Rashid Khan's five-wicket haul helped Afghanistan bowl out Ireland for 288 and put the team in sight of a maiden Test win on the third day of the one-off Test in Dehradun on Sunday. Chasing 147 for victory, Afghanistan were 29 for one with Ihsanullah Janat batting on 16 and Rahmat Shah unbeaten on 11 at the close of play. Afghanistan lost one wicket in the form of Mohammad Shahzad, but Janat and Shah, who made 98 in Afghanistan's first innings total of 314, ensured there was no more damage when the stumps were drawn. Earlier in the day, Andy Balbirnie (82) and Kevin O'Brien (56) scored half-centuries each but Khan came up with career-best figures of five for 82 to bundle out Ireland in the final session of play. Khan accounted for the wickets of James McCollum, O'Brien, Stuart Thompson, George Dockrell and Andrew McBrine to put Afghanistan in a commanding position.

Football legend Puyol attends PSL final:

Legendary Spanish and Barcelona footballer Carles Puyol was the star attraction during the final of the Pakistan Super League at the National Stadium in Karachi on Sunday. "I thought Pakistanis only liked cricket but I have seen they like football a lot also and it made me happy," Puyol said in Spanish while addressing the packed enclosures around him from the centre of the ground. Puyol, who has retired from international football, is widely regarded as one of the best central defenders of his generation following his sterling performances for Spain and Barcelona. Puyol, who is here to promote World Soccer Star matches and the next World Cup, was greeted by loud cheers when he came on stage at the PSL closing ceremony dressed in black. With the help of an interpreter, Puyol said: "Salam Pakistan. I am very happy to be here. It's my first time here and I am enjoying it a lot."



WADA issue, tax waiver on agenda as Manohar to meet CoA members

PTI NEW DELHI, 17 MARCH

The BCCI brass is expected to put forth its proposals on anti-doping policy and the \$22 million tax waiver for future global events when it meets ICC chairman Shashank Manohar in Mumbai on Monday.

On behalf of BCCI, the three-member Committee of Administrator (CoA) along with CEO Rahul Johri will meet Manohar.

During the recent ICC Board meeting in Dubai, the members were updated on WADA's concerns about domestic anti-doping programme in India.

In order to be World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) compliant, the BCCI needs to come under National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) ambit which it has been resisting all this while. "The Board unanimously acknowledged its desire to remain WADA compliant and committed to working in partnership with the BCCI, WADA and the India NADA to resolve the outstanding issues as a matter of urgency," the ICC had stated after the meeting.

However BCCI's contention is that the Board is already WADA-compliant.

"The players' urine samples are tested at the Nation-



al Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL) and the top cricketers' whereabouts have been consistently updated on WADA's database. We have started the process of creating athletes' biological passport also," a senior BCCI official told PTI on condition of anonymity.

It is learnt that BCCI is ready to provide a dossier on NADA's sample collection goof-ups and make it clear that it has no faith in NADA's Dope Control Officers (DCOs).

"We will be reiterating our stand. We have absolutely zero faith in NADA's DCOs. We can have our own chap-

terons who will be helping the players in sample collection but our players will simply not be comfortable giving samples to NADA DCOs," the official said.

On the issue of USD 22 million (Rs 150 crore) tax waiver for the 2021 World Twenty20 and 2023 ODI World Cup, the BCCI is getting ready with an alternate plan to pay the said amount. The tax laws in India don't permit waiver and there remains a possibility that the tournaments might be shifted by the ICC to Sri Lanka or Bangladesh.

"The ICC chairman was very categorical that BCCI needs to pay the amount if they

can't manage tax waiver. We have demanded time till general elections. But we have prepared an alternate plan," the official said.

It is learnt that BCCI has already spoken to the host broadcasters and they are game in paying the excise duty for the camera and other equipments that will be imported. The world cricket's richest body will also request some of its own sponsors to carry the tax burden.

It has also been learnt that BCCI will request ICC to increase the per match hosting fee of the 2021 ICC World T20 from USD 200,000 (Rs 1.37 crore) to USD 350,000 (Rs 2.41 crore).

"We have learnt that ICC has recently agreed to increase the per match hosting rights for the 2020 World T20 in Australia to USD 350,000. We would request them to do the same for us. Right now, we are in 2019 but the costs will increase rapidly in 2021 and we need to be prepared," said the official.

After the meeting with ICC, the CoA will then have its own meeting with multiple agendas.

The full IPL schedule is expected to be released tomorrow and a host of other issues will also come up for discussion. The Supreme Court verdict on Sreesanth is also likely to come up for discussion at the meeting.

No cap on IPL matches, insists Kohli; Tournament to benefit India players for WC, says Kirsten

PTI BENGALURU, 17 MARCH

"You cannot put a cap on anything," said India captain Virat Kohli, insisting that no instructions have been issued to Indian Premier League (IPL) franchises with regards to workload management of World Cup bound players.

However the Indian captain expects his teammates to be smart enough to manage their workload before the mega event starting May 30.

"If I'm able to play 10, 12 or 15 games, it doesn't necessarily mean that the other guy can only play that many. My body might demand I play a certain number of games and I need to be smart about that and rest," Kohli, who will be leading RCB in the IPL, said during the launch of an app.

"Someone else's body might be more capable than mine or less, that is a very individual thing. And everyone wants to play the World Cup, so people will be smart about it because you don't want to miss out on such a big event."

Kohli said that it is up to individual players to deal with the issue to keep their body fit and be in contention for a place in the World Cup-bound squad.

"From a responsibility point of view, all the Indian players will have the responsibility during the IPL to keep a watch on their fitness and their workloads," he said.

"And to continue the frame-



of mind we have created in the Indian team - strive towards excellence and improve every day. Each player will take this tournament as an opportunity to go to the World Cup in a good frame of mind."

World Cup winning former India coach Gary Kirsten feels that IPL would serve as good preparation for the Indian players ahead of the World Cup.

"We do understand all the international players, apart from the Indians, will be called back to their international teams anyway through the IPL," Kirsten said. "We have to accept there's not much we can do about that. We understand the demands that an international player has. We'll be very reasonable in that space."

"If you get yourself match-ready during the IPL, that's going to hold you in really good stead during the World Cup. I think it's an advantage to the Indian players, actually. Because the IPL is such a pressurised tournament, it's great preparation for the World Cup," he added.

South Africa pin World Cup hopes on bowlers

AGENCIES CAPE TOWN, 17 MARCH

South Africa finished their one-day series against Sri Lanka with a clear idea of both the team and the tactics they will use in the upcoming Cricket World Cup.

Sri Lanka, after their fourth 5-0 series defeat in less than two years, appeared to be in disarray.

South African captain Faf du Plessis said after the fifth match on Saturday night that he was "98 to 99 percent" sure who would go to England.

He said the "one or two percent" was to allow for "guys who are really red hot or striking good form".

Sri Lankan captain Lasith Malinga said form in a forthcoming domestic tournament would be important,



while he expected experienced players like Angelo Mathews and Dinesh Chandimal - who did not play in South Africa - to be in contention.

Du Plessis indicated that South Africa were pinning their hopes on a potent bowling line-up to win matches,

even if meant that the team might have a lengthy tail.

South Africa's fast bowlers, backed by leg-spinner Imran Tahir, dominated the Sri Lankan batsmen, who were unable to bat out a full 50 overs in any of the matches.

Du Plessis cited the exam-

ple of Pakistan, who won the 2017 Champions Trophy in England.

"I've been in teams that have had a very long batting line-up and it didn't prove successful," said Du Plessis.

"You can learn from your mistakes and you can look at other teams where they have got it right. Pakistan had a very average batting line-up but it didn't matter to them because they kept bowling teams out."

Du Plessis said that if the bowlers performed, it would be up to the top six in the batting order to make sure they scored enough runs.

Malinga, who has captained Sri Lanka to nine one-day losses without a win, said at the post-match presentation: "We tried hard in the last five matches but we didn't get enough runs on the board."

Malinga said his players had fought hard and the bowlers had stuck to their plans without luck.

But evidence of the fight claimed by Malinga was seldom in evidence during the matches.

With coach Chandika Hathurusingha recalled to Sri Lanka ahead of the remaining matches on tour - three Twenty20 internationals - it seemed Sri Lanka had much to sort out before the World Cup starting on May 30.

But the same was said before last month's Test series in South Africa, which Sri Lanka won against the odds under the captaincy of Dimuth Karunaratne. Seven of South Africa's likely World Cup squad will be playing in the Indian Premier League, which starts on Saturday.

Kohli, Bumrah maintain top positions in ICC ODI rankings

PTI DUBAI, 17 MARCH

India skipper Virat Kohli and pacer Jasprit Bumrah have retained their top positions in the batsmen and bowlers' list of the latest ICC ODI rankings issued Sunday.

Kohli remained at number one spot after scoring 310 in the recently-concluded home series against Australia while his deputy Rohit Sharma hit 202 runs to maintain the No.2 spot in the batting chart.

Kedar Jadhav's all-round effort has helped him move up 11 places to a career-best 24th after the five-match series, which India lost 2-3.

Meanwhile, South Africa opener Quinton de Kock has grabbed fourth position among batsmen after playing a huge part in his team's 5-0 victory over Sri Lanka in a home series that ended in Cape Town on Saturday.

The 26-year-old left-handed wicketkeeper-batsman's 353 runs in the series, which included a century and three half-centuries, has helped



him win the player of the series award and gain four slots in the rankings.

New Zealand's Ross Taylor has maintained the number three spot.

In the bowlers list, Bumrah is sitting at the top with 774 points.

Among others, New Zealand fast bowler Trent Boult has moved up a place to second after finishing with six wickets against Bangladesh, pushing Afghanistan's Rashid Khan to No.3, while South Africa leg-spinner Imran Tahir has gained seven slots to

reach fourth place after taking nine wickets against Sri Lanka.

The all-rounders' table continued to be headed by Rashid Khan. However, no Indian figures in the top-5.

In the ODI team rankings, England and India are at the top two positions.

New Zealand have narrowly edged past South Africa to third spot while Australia have gone past Pakistan to fifth place.

South Africa have gained one point while Sri Lanka have lost two points.

Steve Smith joins Royals camp in Jaipur, Warne expects him to be "hungry"

PTI NEW DELHI, 17 MARCH

Having been welcomed with open arms by his national teammates in Dubai, Steve Smith Sunday touched down in Jaipur to join his IPL franchise Rajasthan Royals' pre-tournament camp ahead of cash-rich league starting March 23.

With an aim to get back in the Australian side for the World Cup, Smith is expected to raise his game for the Royals and franchise's brand ambassador Shane Warne knows that the former skipper will be "as hungry as ever".

"He (Smith) will be so excited to turn up and play cricket. That's what he loves doing and that's what he is very good at. Smith and Warner are two of the best players in world cricket, I think Smith will be giving a lot and integrate with the team," Warne told PTI during an interaction.

Smith and David Warner would soon be completing their one-year international ban for their involvement in

ball tampering scandal in South Africa last year. The duo spent some time with the Australian team in Dubai on invitation of coach Justin Langer and both said that they felt at home instantly with the vibes that they got from their teammates.

With rising sensation Ashton Turner unavailable for first three games for Royals due to international commitment against Pakistan, Smith along with Ben Stokes, Jos Buttler and Jofra Archer will be key overseas players for the 2008 champions.

Playing for Rajasthan Royals will be a huge thing for Smith as this is the only cricket he will be playing before World Cup, where he will make an international comeback.

"Having Smith's experience around and his hunger and passion as the only cricket that is before World Cup, will be a big thing for him. I have no doubt that Smith and Warner will get back to their best as they were before," Warne said.

Annu Rani re-writes national record, adivasi wage labourer wins 10,000m race

PTI PATIALA, 17 MARCH

Javelin thrower Annu Rani rewrote her own national record to clinch the gold and qualify for both the Asian and World Championships on the third and penultimate day of the Federation Cup National Senior Athletics Championships here on Sunday.

The 26-year-old Rani, who represented Uttar Pradesh, hurled the spear to a distance of 62.34m, nearly half a metre more than her earlier national record of 61.86m that she recorded in 2017. Her effort bettered the qualifying standard of 61.50m for the World Championships to be held in Doha in September-October later this year.

She also qualified for the Asian Championships, also to be held in Doha next month, for which the qualifying standard of 58m was set by the Athletics Federation of India.

Haryana's Kumari Sharmila won the silver with a throw of 54.98m while Rupinder Kaur of Punjab was third with an effort of 53.90m at the National Institute of Sports grounds here.

Iavit Murali Kumar, an adivasi athlete who worked as part time labourer in road construction in Dang district of Gujarat, won the men's 10,000m race to qualify for the Asian Championships.

Kumar, who had won the men's 5000m race on the first day of the event, crossed the finish line in 29.21.99 to win his second gold of the meet, bettering the Asian Championships qualification mark of 29 minutes 50 seconds.

"On Sundays and two months in between school annual exam and new session, I used to work as daily wage labourer in road construction in my place and earned Rs 150 a day. That was in 2013 and 2014. I used the money in buying running shoes," said the 22-year-old who hails from a village near Saputara hill station in Dang.

"My parents are adivasi and you know they do not have regular income. Athletics is



costly, a pair of running shoes costs Rs 5000. But I got selected to the Bhopal Athletics Academy in 2015 after a trial and I am currently training there. Gujarat government also helped me a lot. Under the Shaktidoot Scheme, I got Rs 5 lakh in 2016 after winning medals at international level.

"My aim is to do well in the Asian Championships and qualify for the World Championships. My ultimate aim is the Olympic Games," he added.

After class X, he shifted to Open School system and last year he failed in the English paper of the 12th exam. He took the English compartment exam this year.

"If I pass, I will take up a job, maybe in police or income tax. At the same time, I will study and complete graduation (not regular course) and run at the same time," Kumar, who won 3000m and 5000m races in Gujarat Khel Mahakumbha and got Rs 5000 as prize money, said.

Rani, on the other hand, has been in the athletics cir-

cuit for some time, winning a bronze each in the 2014 Asian Games and 2017 Asian Championships but consistency has never been her forte. In 2017, she created the then national record of 61.86m but all other performances that year were below 60m.

Last year, her best show was a 57.37m. She was not initially selected for the 2018 Asian Games but later made a 'backdoor' entry on the basis of her performance in the Inter-Railway Meet. A medal was in her reach in Jakarta, but she could only come up with a 53.93m to finish sixth.

"Yes, you can say there has been a sort of mental block as I was not being able to do my best during competition. I was doing well during practice but it was not getting translated on the field. I focused a lot on this mental aspect and it came off good today," Rani said. "I have been in that lean form for some time and it happens to athletes. I hope my performance graph will be now on the up."