

Smith steps down from IPL captaincy, may miss league as CA probe begins

NEW DELHI, Mar 26:

The embattled Steve Smith today stepped down as Rajasthan Royals captain in a fallout of the ball-tampering scandal that has left the Australian skipper's reputation in tatters, raising serious doubts over his participation in the upcoming Indian Premier League.

India's Test vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane will now lead Rajasthan Royals in IPL-11 starting April 7.

There is a high degree of possibility that the tainted skipper along with his deputy David Warner might face harsh sanctions from Cricket Australia once the investigations get over on Wednesday. Smith has already been suspended by the ICC for one Test but it appeared to be only the beginning of his miseries.

According to a report in Sydney Morning Herald: "Smith, Warner and (Cameron) Bancroft - the players at the heart of the scandal - were set to be among the first players interviewed by Head of Integrity (CA) Iain Roy, who was endeavouring to paint a picture of how the ball-tampering plan was devised as well as the extent of others' knowledge of it.

"The wider role of head coach Darren Lehmann and his staff was

also being examined." In a statement released late on Monday, Cricket Australia chief James Sutherland said he plans to meet with Roy in Johannesburg to be briefed on the investigation that was conducted with the team in Cape Town and to determine any course of action undertaken by CA.

He said the inquiry is being carried out "as a matter of urgency", and that the findings it yielded will be shared with the public to be kept updated on its progress.

CA chairman David Peever said the board of directors had been fully briefed on the issue as it stands, and he expected there would be information to share publicly within 48 hours.

"The Cricket Australia Board has been fully updated on the issue and supports James travelling to South Africa to manage the response to the investigation currently underway," Peever said.

"We expect to be able to fully update the Australian public on the findings on Wednesday morning (Tuesday evening in Johannesburg)."

It is believed that Cricket Australia wants to hit the duo where it hurts the most - scuttle their participation in the lucrative

multi-million dollar IPL. If the duo gets suspended for at least one year, then there are chances that they might not even be a part of the Australian team that will take on India Down Under at the end of this year.

Warner plays for Sunrisers Hyderabad. Royals, on their part, stated that it was Smith who stepped down from captaincy allowing Rahane to take over.

"Steve believes given the current circumstances it's in the best interest of the Rajasthan Royals that he steps down as captain so the team can get ready for the start of the IPL without the ongoing distractions," Royals' head of cricket Zubin Bharucha said.

Co-owner of Royals Manoj Badale acknowledged that Smith is going through a tough time.

"What happened in South Africa was clearly wrong, especially given that it appears to have been pre-meditated. That said, this will be a difficult time for Steve as well, given how much he cares about the game," said Badale.

Rajasthan Royals' mentor and former skipper Shane Warne is in Cape Town and it is understood that he might have had talked the Australian captain into taking this decision. (PTI)

State Winter Games conclude at Gulmarg

Excelsior Sports Correspondent

GULMARG, Mar 26: Organized by Winter Games Association of J&K under the auspices of J&K State Sports Council the three days Annual State Winter Games concluded at Kongdori, here yesterday. Commandant HAWS Maj. General Atul Kaushak, SM VSM was the chief guest on the valedictory function held in Visitors Hall of State Cable Car Corporation, while MLA Gulmarg and President Winter Games Association was the guest of honour.

The other special invitees were Col Dhillon Director IIS&M, Riyaz Ahmad Malik General Manager, JKSCCC, Mudassar Mir President Snow Shoe Federation of India, Capt. Chander Mouli, Asstt Director Youth Services Shabir Wanbi, Olympians Gul Mustafa Dev and Nadeem Iqbal, international Skiers Hafeeza Hassan, Arif Khan, and Mahmood Lone, Asstt Manager Gondola Fayaz Ahmad and Prof Gurmeet Kour.

In his address Abbas Wani said this was the biggest winter championship in India in which more than 150 athletes of all age groups took part and kept Gulmarg abuzz of sporting events at Gulmarg this winter.

Maj. General Kaushak after congratulating the participants and organizers assured his full support to the WGAKJ in conducting such mega events.

Later-on, MLA Gulmarg mementoes to the Major General and Riyaz Malik for their contri-

Guv honours winners of NZ Declamation Contest for Silver Rolling Trophy

Excelsior Sports Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 26: The final round of the 8th Annual Inter State Northern Zone Declamation Contest, 2018 for Silver Rolling Trophy instituted by Governor, NN Vohra, organized by the Higher Education Department was held at Govt PG College for Women, Gandhi Nagar, here today.

It was held on the topic "Is Demonetization a Success or Failure?"

Mr Vohra was the chief guest on the occasion, while Usha Vohra, First Lady of the State was the guest of honour in the valedictory session, who honoured the winners on the occasion.

Prof Anju Bhasin, Vice Chancellor, Cluster University of Jammu presided over the session. The aim of instituting the Silver Rolling Trophy is to provide the students a vibrant platform for mutual exchange of ideas, beliefs, cultures and diverse views on contemporary issues and challenges that confront our society in present time.

While addressing the audience, Mr Vohra complemented the college for successfully holding the mega event year after year and also lauded the participants for their relevant deliberations focusing upon the positive and negative aspects of the concerned topic with zeal and enthusiasm.

He urged upon all the stakeholders to channelize the energy of the

3-day mega sports event at Jagti from today

Excelsior Sports Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 26: 3-day mega sports event in the disciplines of Cricket and Volleyball, being organized by Minorities Welfare Organization Jammu and Kashmir, will get underway at Jagti, near here from tomorrow.

According to a handout issued here, 16 teams of Cricket and 8 teams of Volleyball will be taking part in this sporting extravaganza, which will be inaugurated by Bollywood Actress, Preeti Sapru at 10 am sharp.

The concluding function will be held on March 29, 2018, wherein Bollywood Actress and Ex Member Parliament, Jaya Pradha will be the chief guest and renowned Punjabi singer Gurdasman will be the special guest.

The winners will be honoured with trophies and medals, while all the participants will be presented mementoes as a token of gratitude from the organizers.



Governor NN Vohra and First Lady Usha Vohra posing with the winners of Silver Rolling Trophy in Jammu.

Earlier, in the inaugural session, the chief guest, Syed Mohd Altaf Bukhari, Minister for Education and Finance, declared the contest open, while Dr Asgar Hassan Samoon, I.A.S., Principal Secretary, Higher Education Department was the guest of honour. Prof ZA Chatt, Director Colleges presided over the function.

The team comprising Mohd Hashim and Prabhat Kumar of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Punjab, Chandigarh (U.T) participated in the contest.

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The Participants were adjudged by a team of Jury Members comprising of Dr Deepshikha Kotwal, Head, Students of Languages, Central University of Jammu, Prof Neetu Andotra, Head, Department of Commerce, University of Jammu, Dr Pavitra Kumar Jena, Director, School of Economics, SMVDU Katra, Prof NR Sharma, Former Dean and Head, PG Department of Education, University of Jammu and SC Sharma, Former, General Manager, Reserve Bank of India, Jammu.

The observers to the event were Prof Jitender Khajuria, Registrar, Cluster University of Jammu and Prof Yasmeeen Ashai, Nodal Principal, Kashmir Division.

The programme ended with formal vote of thanks by Prof Satinder Singh, Nodal Principal, Jammu Division.

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Hockey players posing along with chief guest and other dignitaries during opening ceremony at Sports Stadium Poonch.

District Poonch Hockey Championship gets underway

Excelsior Sports Correspondent

POONCH, Mar 26: Poonch District Hockey Championship in junior category boys commenced at Sports Stadium, here today.

The Championship is being organized by Hockey Poonch under the aegis of Hockey J&K.

The opening match was played between Stadium XI and Poonch Royals. Stadium XI won the match by three goals to nil (3-0). For Stadium XI, Agrim scored two goals in 13th and 39th minutes of the match, while Shahid netted the ball in 8th minute.

Nirdosh Kumar, Ic Manager

India lose again, Australia script 36-run win

MUMBAI, Mar 26:

enough to take the home side to victory.

India were knocked out of reckoning from the Twenty20 tri-series final after Australia handed the hosts their third successive defeat, the highlight of which was medium pacer Megan Schutt becoming the first bowler from Down Under to claim a hat-trick in the format.

Australia outplayed Harmanpreet Kaur's team by 36 runs. Having failed to secure a single win in the series so far, India are without any points right now and would be aiming for a consolation win over England in their last league match on Thursday.

Australia set India a challenging target of 186 for five with the help of twin half centuries by Beth Mooney and Elyse Villani. They then restricted the hosts to 150 for 5 in 20 overs.

Schutt (3-31) wreaked havoc at the Branourne Stadium by claiming a hat-trick. Her scalps included the in-form Smriti Mandhana (3), veteran Mithali Raj, who was dismissed for a duck, and Deepti Sharma (2).

While Schutt cleaned up Mandhana and Raj off the fifth and the sixth ball of the second over. She completed her hat-trick in the first ball of the fifth over by removing Sharma, who gave a sitter to Amanda Jade Wellington at mid-off, leaving the hosts in deep trouble at 26/3.

Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (33 off 30 balls) and Mumbai-batter Jemimah Rodrigues (50 off 41 balls) stitched a 54-run stand for the fourth wicket, but that was not

2nd State Universities Sports C'ship IUST Awantipora wins men's Football title; JU, NIT lift TT titles

*CUS to face KU in men's Cricket final

Excelsior Sports Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 26: Islamic University of Science & Technology (IUST) Awantipora claimed the men's Football title trophy, while NIT Kashmir and University of Jammu (JU) bagged Table Tennis men and women titles respectively in the ongoing 2nd State Universities Sports Championship-2018, organized by the Directorate of Sports & Physical Education, University of Jammu at the University Campus, here.

Earlier, in Football (Men) final, IUST Awantipora defeated University of Jammu by two goals to one (2-1) and won the Championship.

In Table-Tennis (Men) final, NIT Kashmir drubbed University of Jammu by three goals to one (3-1) and won the title trophy.

SMVDU Katra beat University of Kashmir by 3-2 and won the bronze medal.

In Table-Tennis (Women) final, University of Jammu defeated SMVDU Katra by 3-0 and won the Championship.

The Cluster University Jammu thrashed University of Kashmir by 3-0 to claim bronze medal.

In Cricket (Men), Cluster University Srinagar will take on University of Kashmir in the title clash as in the 2nd semifinal match, Cluster University Srinagar beat University of Jammu by 28 runs and sealed berth in the finals.



Cricket teams posing along with dignitaries during 2nd State Universities Sports Championship in Jammu.

The final match will be played tomorrow.

NIT Kashmir beat University of Jammu by 5 wickets to win bronze medal.

The participating teams include the University of Jammu, University of Kashmir, SKUAST Jammu, SKUAST Kashmir, Central University Jammu, Central University Kashmir, Cluster University Jammu, Cluster University Srinagar, NIT Srinagar, SKIMS Soura, BGSB University Rajouri, SMVDU Katra,

Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan Jammu, Islamic University of Science & Technology Awantipora and Central Institute of Buddhist Studies Leh.

The teams are participating in the disciplines of Cricket (M&W),

KATHUA, Mar 26: The Department of Youth Services and Sports Kathua organized District Level tournament in the disciplines of Kho-Kho and Volleyball for under-17 years boys and girls under RMSA at Sports Stadium, here today.

The tournament is being organized under the overall supervision of District Youth Services and Sports Officer Kathua, Subash Chander Bhardwaj in which 164 players of 15 teams of district participated on the first day.

In the boys section, Zone Lakhnagar and Zone Sallan won the trophies of Kho-Kho and Volleyball respectively. Earlier, the tournament was inaugurated by DYSSO Kathua in the presence of ZPEOs Kailash Chander and Pradeep Singh.

The closing ceremony will be held tomorrow at 10:30 am at the University Sports Stadium.

Anish wins India's 3rd individual gold in Jr World Cup

SYDNEY, Mar 26:

Rising shooter Anish Bhanwala secured India a third individual gold medal at the ISSF Junior World Cup when the 15-year-old finished atop the podium in men's 25m rapid fire pistol here today.

Having qualified for the final with the highest score, Bhanwala prevailed over two of his India teammates -- Anhad Jawanda and Rajkanwar Singh Sandhu -- and three Chinese participants in the medal round.

India are now placed second in the overall standings with 15 medals -- comprising six gold, three silver and six bronze -- behind China and ahead of top shooting nations such as Italy and hosts Australia.

China secured the gold medal and set a new junior world record with 1733 points, while India's Bhanwala, Jawanda and Adarsh Singh took silver. The bronze medal was awarded to another Indian team comprising Sandhu, Japteshy Singh Jaspal and Mandeep Singh.

Anish, who was placed seventh in this event at the ISSF World Cup Stage 1 in Guadalajara, Mexico earlier this month, led the match since its very first stage, as he was the only shooter able to nail a

Param Risers, Nagrota FC register wins

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 26: Param Risers and Nagrota Football Club defeated their rivals convincingly in the ongoing 2nd Phase of the 1st Mufti Mohd Sayeed Memorial Gold Cup State Level Football Tournament-2018 'B Division', being organized by DFA Jammu, here.

In the first match, Param Risers thrashed Churchill Brothers by five goals to one (5-1). From Param Risers, Rohit scored 2 goals in 31st & 35th minutes, while Sachin, Nringpo and Harpreet scored 3rd, 4th and 5th goal in 38th, 45th and 57th minutes of the match.

Swayam scored the lone goal for Churchill Brothers in 53rd minute of the match.

In another match, Nagrota Football Club thrashed Moon Light FC by six goals to nil (6-0). Mohit scored 2 goals, while Shivam, Harsh and Lakshay netted one goal each.

The matches were officiated by Divanshu, Abhishek, Ankit, Ajay Singh, Ashish Kumar, Honey Mehra, Anish Kumar and Surjeet Pardhan.



Winners posing along with chief guest and other dignitaries in Akhnoor.

Little Flower crushes Akhnoor Tigers by 71 runs

Excelsior Sports Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 26: Little Flower High School Akhnoor thrashed Akhnoor Tigers in under-14 Exhibition Cricket match played at Government Higher Secondary School ground, here today. Earlier, winning the toss and batting first, Little Flower High School Akhnoor scored 111/7 in the stipulated 20 overs. Guru Preet, Neeraj Gupta and Nikhil Jamwal contributed 17, 16 and 12 runs respectively. From Akhnoor Tigers, Paras took 2 wickets, while Pragun, Ansh and Aryan shared 1 wicket each.

The match was organized by Singh Cricket Club Akhnoor to promote Cricket in Akhnoor Sub Division.

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Annual Sports Fest inaugurated

Excelsior Sports Correspondent

KATRA, Mar 26: Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU) successfully organized Volleyball tournament under the flag of 'Sarang-2K18'-Annual Sports Festival of the University.

In Volleyball (girls) final, 'Prithvi' House defeated 'Aakash' House to win the title, while in boys category, 'Aakash' House confirmed its berth for the final match.

The second finalist will be confirmed after the semifinal

Kho-Kho, Volleyball matches held at Kathua

Excelsior Sports Correspondent

In Volleyball under-17 boys final, Zone Sallan won the trophy by defeating Zone Hiranagar by 2-0 sets. In semifinals, Zone Hiranagar outplayed Zone Billawar by 2-0 sets and Zone Sallan outplayed Zone Bhaddu by 2-0 sets.

In Kho-Kho under-17 boys final, Zone Lakhnagar claimed the title, defeating Zone Sallan by 3 points, while in semifinals, Zone Sallan outplayed Zone Hiranagar by 4 points and Zone Lakhnagar defeated Zone Billawar by 7 points.

The matches were officiated by Ashok Kumar Magotra, Pardeep Singh, Mandeep Singh, Praveen Singh, Vinod Kumari, Anita Rani, Sunil Kumar, Chetan Sharma, Vinod Shetty.

Activity incharges Kuldeep Singh, Rani Andotra, Sucharita Mehta, Savita Sharma were also present on the occasion.

Wagner bounces New Zealand to innings victory

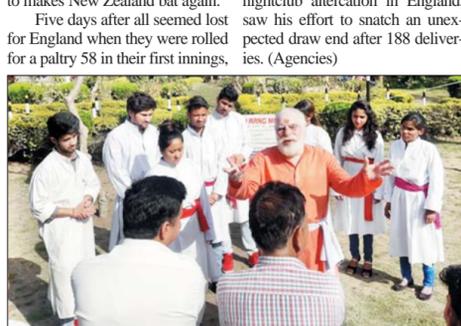
AUCKLAND, Mar 26:

New Zealand settled the outcome with the tourists all out for 320. For three consecutive sessions in England's second innings, New Zealand changed the flow of the match with a wicket in the final over.

Joe Root went at stumps on day four to have England 132 for three, Moeen Ali fell at tea on day five after adding 36 runs with Stokes, and then Stokes went at dinner ending an 83-run stand with Chris Woakes.

Five years ago to the day England lost Ian Bell in the last over before tea to be seven down going into the last session, but then they had battling Matt Prior to save the day as they survived until stumps with one wicket remaining.

This time there would be no such heroics as Stokes, returning from exile after being dropped before the Ashes series following a nightclub altercation in England, saw his effort to snatch an unexpected draw end after 188 deliveries. (Agencies)



A scene of Nukad 'Badlaav Zaroori Hai' staged by Ek Sath Rang Mandal in Jammu.

Ek Sath Rang Mandal stages 'Badlaav Zaroori Hai'

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 26: Ek Sath Rang Mandal presented its 292nd Monday Theatre with a progressive 'Nukad' namely 'Badlaav Zaroori Hai' under Monday Theatre Series at Floriculture Govt Park, Kc Morh, here.

The Nukad was presented on a 'World Theatre Day'.

The theme of the Nukad was to contribute for progress and prosperity of the society, wherein a retired person decides to awaken young generation for social

contribution of the society.

The old person Kanshi Ram advises young generation to respect women folk and old members for betterment and good health of the society.

Actors who performed were Anuroop Pathania, Raju Mad, Ashok Sharma, Ishani Paul, Shahid, Akash Abrol, Aman, Tejas Rampal, Shelly Manhas, Kavita, Vidhi Manhas, Rahul Dev and Vijay Malla.

This Nukad was written by Vijay Malla and directed by Anuroop Pathania.