

Arsenal midfielder Santi Cazorla suffers fresh injury setback

LONDON: Arsenal midfielder Santi Cazorla has suffered another setback in his on-going injury nightmare after undergoing further Achilles tendon surgery.

The Spain international has not featured for Arsenal since a 6-0 Champions League win over Ludogorets last October and revealed earlier this month the extent of an ordeal that almost led to his foot being amputated.

Cazorla has undergone multiple surgeries on his right ankle and lost eight centimetres from the tendon, while he contracted an infection that left him at risk of losing his foot to gangrene. In the interview with Marca, the 32-year-old said he hoped to return to action for Arsenal in January but those ambitions have now been dashed. Once again, infection is the source of the problem and Cazorla tweeted: "Due to some discomfort in the tendon that has dragged on for the last few days, I have had to undergo surgery." It is delaying the date of return to the pitch. I maintain the hope and motivation to enjoy my great passion, soccer." Cazorla joined Arsenal from Malaga in 2012 and has made 180 appearances in all competitions, scoring 29 times and winning two FA Cups.



MS Dhoni greeted with 'Boom Boom Afridi' chants in Jammu and Kashmir

NEW DELHI: MS Dhoni's visit to Jammu and Kashmir has generated plenty of headlines in the country. From making his views clear on India vs Pakistan to interacting with youngsters in the Kashmir valley, the former India skipper has had a busy time.

Dhoni, who is an honorary Lt Col in the army, was the chief-guest of an army-sponsored cricket tournament in the valley. It was during his visit recently to the stadium in Jammu and Kashmir that a video emerged where people present were greeting the former India skipper with chants of 'Boom, Boom Afridi', in reference to Pakistan's former talismanic all-rounder Shahid Afridi.

The security personnel deployed at the venue tried pushing the crowd back but to no avail as the crowd kept chanting the Pakistan all-rounder's name. Afridi had retired from international cricket last year but his achievements had made him a cult figure in Pakistan. During the cricket tournament in Kunzer, which is 35 kms from Srinagar, Dhoni had said, "An India-Pakistan cricket series is much more than just sport. It's not a simple decision.

It's a diplomatic as well as political decision. It's best left to the government to take a call." The Pakistan Cricket Board had sent a legal notice to the Board of Control for Cricket in India, initiating proceedings to seek compensation for failing to honour the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the two cricket boards in 2014.

The BCCI has made it amply clear, that it won't play any series with Pakistan, given the current tension between the two nations. India last played a bilateral Test series against Pakistan in 2007 while the last bilateral ODI and Twenty20 International series was held in India in 2012. The two teams play each other only in International Cricket Council tournaments like the Champions Trophy, World T20 and the World Cup.

"Ben's a world-class cricketer and he'd make any team in the world better. But there is still a police investigation going on, so from that side of things we don't know any more than you do.

"The fact he's out there [New Zealand] playing cricket means he's a little bit closer to Australia if he was able to join the squad. "We've all seen he's been training indoors, but that can only get you so far. Nothing beats playing cricket outdoors. It's great to see him back doing what he loves and what he's good at. "As they prepare for the second Test, which starts in Adelaide on Saturday, Woakes feels England can be encouraged by their early efforts at the Gabba, before a second-innings collapse sealed their fate.

"A lot of people wrote us off before we arrived," he said. "And yes, looking at the scorecard for that first Test, you'd think we've been hammered.

"But we actually take some positives out of that game, having performed really well for three days. "If we can do that for longer in Adelaide, we've got a good chance of going 1-1."

A midnight curfew has also been imposed on England's players after it emerged Jonny Bairstow was involved in a bizarre incident with opponent Cameron Bancroft during a tour match in Perth, when the wicketkeeper-batsman greeted the Australian with a headbutt.

Woakes, though, insists the curfew will not impact the players' normal activities.

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Sachin Tendulkar's iconic No.10 jersey may be retired by BCCI - This is why

Sachin Tendulkar's iconic No.10 jersey might not be worn by any Indian cricket team players as the Board of Control for Cricket in India claims that players are unwilling to don it out of respect for the icon.

MUMBAI: The No.10 jersey that Sachin Tendulkar made his own may not be seen on an Indian player in the near future with the BCCI claiming that cricketers are unwilling to don it out of respect for the icon despite the absence of any plan to formally retire it. Tendulkar retired in 2013 and since then, the No.10 jersey has only been seen once on an Indian player when Shardul Thakur wore it earlier this year on his ODI debut during the tour of Sri Lanka.

The 26-year-old pacer was trolled on social media for his choice and later went on to explain himself, stating that he picked the number for numerological reasons. "It's a very individual choice. If players don't want to wear a certain number, one can't force them. ICC might just tell you that a team can't officially retire a jersey but it would never tell you that it's mandatory to wear that number," a BCCI official told PTL. "The BCCI has not taken any such call (retiring the No.10 jersey). It's a very informal thing among players. Also you don't want young players to be abused like it happened with Shardul Thakur," he added referring to the trolling Thakur was subjected to for wearing the number.

There is no precedence of jersey number being retired in honour of a player in international cricket. Tendulkar's IPL team, the Mumbai Indians, had, however, retired the No.10 shirt in his honour. Iconic jersey numbers have always had a strong emotive appeal in international football but even FIFA has never allowed any particular number being retired in honour of a player.

However, clubs have done so, the most famous instance being Italian team Napoli retiring Maradona's No.10 jersey to honour his legendary stint with the side.

AB de Villiers sets sights on Test comeback, could play warm-up game vs Zimbabwe

MUMBAI: AB de Villiers, who has not made a Test appearance for the South African cricket team since January last year, could turn out for a South African Invitation XI in warm-up game in a bid make his comeback to the format, reported ESPNcricinfo.

The three-day warm-up match will be played against the Zimbabwe cricket team from December 20-22. The visitors will be using the friendly game to prepare for the maiden four-day Test match against South Africa that is scheduled a few days later. "We'd like to get him back in whites as soon as possible and we have some plans in place. There's the practice match which will be good for him," Linda Zondi, South Africa's convener of selectors told ESPNcricinfo.

"The manner in which he has played has shown that he is ready. It was never a case of him being rusty but just about getting him match fitness," added Zondi, indication of the right-handed batsman's run of form in the Ram Slam T20 matches.

Injuries had sidelined De Villiers from the long format, having last played his last Test match against England at SuperSport Park in January 2016. A self-proclaimed



break from the format in 2017 had led to speculation of his retirement.

"I've had time at home to get fresh, time to work on my body, and time to work on skills I've not worked on in many years," ESPNcricinfo quoted Villiers as saying.

"I've sort of rediscovered that love of the game. I've not had an off-season where I've gone to nets to work on my skills and technique

for ages. Last year, in the peak of the season, I was less ready for Test cricket than I am now."

"It will be nice to go out there and spend some time on my legs. Form-wise I feel ready, but it's important to stand in the field for a while and hopefully get a long knock," De Villiers said.

De Villiers had turned out for South Africa against New Zealand

and England in limited overs format earlier this year, after which was seen in action against Bangladesh.

Whether he will make the Test side is a matter of contention.

Even Zondi appears to be unsure of the same. "For us as selectors, it's about getting him into the squad and then it will be worked out from there. It's a nice problem to have," said Zondi.

Umar Akmal declared 'dead' on social media, Pakistan cricketer clarifies

LAHORE: Umar Akmal has endured a tough couple of days after the Pakistan batsman was rumoured to be declared dead on social media. Umar, who is currently not featuring in the Pakistan national cricket team, put out a message to assure fans of his well-being. The 27-year-old batsman, who has also kept wickets, posted on Twitter, "Allhamdulillah I am safe n perfectly fine in Lahore all news coming from social media is fake. And Insha Allah I will join #National20cup2017 #Semifinale" He also posted a video reinstating the same, also urging people not to spread fake news such as this. "As salaam alaikum guys (Peace be unto you). By the grace of Allah I am safe. All the news doing the rounds is fake. You will see me live at the semifinals. And I request everyone not to spread news like this. Thank you very much." Umar Akmal's rumoured 'death' is another instance of fake news being circulated. The incident has its roots in an incident which occurred in Islamabad. Armed forces violently took action



against protests organised by a religious group. The violence ended up claiming six lives and Umar Akmal was reported to have been one of the victims to have lost their lives in the clash. Many social media users posted images of one of the deceased, claiming it was Umar Akmal. But with the 27-year-old cricketer coming out to assure the world that he is alive thus squashing any such claims, further revealing that he will participate in the National T20 Cup when his side -- Lahore Whites take on Faisalabad in the semifinals in Rawalpindi on November 29.