

Akram can appeal ban

INTERNET, undated

Former Pakistan captain Wasim Akram has been granted leave to appeal against a fine for failing to cooperate with a match-fixing inquiry.

A Pakistan court ruled on Monday that Akram's side of the case was not heard in the original 1999 investigation and ordered the country's cricket board to consider his evidence.

All-rounder Akram, part of the Pakistan's 2003 World Cup squad, has also appealed a ban on him ever captaining his country again.

Justice Muhammad Javed Buttar of the High Court in Lahore ordered the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) to rule on the appeal - and the 3,500-pound fine - within one month.

"There was no evidence worthy of credence against Wasim Akram and he has full right to file an appeal," said Akram's lawyer, Najamul Hasan Kazmi.

"He was never given a chance of a hearing."

Judge Malik Muhammad Qayyum, who led the 1999 inquiry, also banned former captain Salim Malik and paceman Ata-ur-Rehman for life.

He also recommended fines for Waqar Younis, Inzamam-ul-Haq, Saeed Anwar and Mushtaq Ahmed, saying they had not told the entire truth during the investigation.

ECB to look for Govt clearance

REUTERS, London

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) will meet the government on Thursday to discuss whether England should play their World Cup match in Zimbabwe, an ECB spokeswoman has said.

Several politicians have called for the team to boycott the February 13 game in Harare as a show of opposition to the Robert Mugabe regime.

Mugabe has received widespread criticism for his controversial land reform programme, a policy opponents blame for the country's deepening economic crisis and food shortages.

Zimbabwe is scheduled to host six of the 54 matches in the World Cup tournament, which is being staged in southern Africa from February 9 to March 23.

ECB Chief Executive Tim Lamb will head the team of officials who will meet the government after he returns from Australia where England have just completed the Ashes series.

The government has said it cannot order the England team not to play in Zimbabwe.

School cricket

FROM PAGE 13
Result: Hammadia High School won by 1 wicket.

Shaheedbagh High School v Shampa Kindergarten

Venue: East End Club ground
Shaheedbagh 90 all out in 24.1 overs (Rajib 17; Poragh 6/4, Rakesh 2/25)

Shapla 92 for no loss in 9.1 overs (Poragh 60 not out, Shafuliq 19 not out)

Result: Shapla Kindergarten won by 10 wickets

BD squad

FROM PAGE 13
Stadium in Mirpur while the Maldivians trained at the BUET ground.

Sri Lanka, which was the first side to reach the capital for the eight-team tournament on Monday afternoon, also worked out at Mirpur.

Meanwhile three more teams Afghanistan, India and Pakistan are due to arrive this morning.

Nepal will be last team here on January 9.

AFC CHIEF DUE TOMORROW

The president of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Mohamed bin-Hammam will arrive in the capital tomorrow morning to attend the opening ceremony on Friday.

Waugh decides in weeks

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Steve Waugh said on Tuesday there was no point continuing his glorious cricket career just to satisfy fulfilling statistics.

The 37-year-old Australian skipper said after Monday's final Ashes Test here against England that he would reflect on his position over the coming weeks.

Waugh can go out of cricket on his own terms after scoring a magnificent 102 in the first innings on Friday which buried any suggestion that he was not worth his place in the side on form.

He had indicated previously that he wanted to return to play in India in 2004 and try to win Australia's first series there in more than 30 years.

But so perfect was his innings, where he scored a four off the last ball to raise his euphoric century, that there is a compelling case for Waugh to now be considering stepping down from the game.

"The only one who can make the decision is myself and I've got to consult with the people around me, particularly my family, and work out what the best decision is," Waugh said on Tuesday.

"I've got to see whether there's still a challenge out there, that's the reason why I play cricket, whether I can still improve and whether there's a point to it."

"There's no point in just going on for the sake of it and playing just for the numbers or the stats or whatever."

"I've been doing it for 18 years now so I've just got to weigh up all those issues and try and make the right decision but I still love playing for Australia and getting out there and doing battle."

"Being 3-50 the other day in a tough situation (in the fifth Test), I realised that I still wanted to play cricket but there's other things that come into the picture."

Waugh has nothing to prove. He has scored a 29th Test century equalling cricket immortal Don Bradman's Australian record.

It is bettered only by Indians Sunil Gavaskar (34) and Sachin Tendulkar (31) on the all-time list.

He has also joined compatriot Allan Border (11,174) and Gavaskar

(10,122) in the exclusive 10,000-run club.

Waugh's Sydney appearance was his 156th Test, equalling the world record of Border, who is one of the selectors who will deliberate in March on the next Australian touring side to the West Indies.

With two centuries in his past six

record of any Test captain with 33 victories.

Waugh on Tuesday withdrew with an injury from the Bradman XI to play England in a one-dayer in Bowral, southwest of here, on Wednesday.

An Australian Cricket Board (ACB) statement said Waugh had



PHOTO: AFP

THIS MAY BE HIS LAST HURRAH? Australia captain Steve Waugh proudly holds aloft the Ashes trophy after retaining the series with a 4-1 win over England at Sydney on Monday.

Test matches, Waugh's form assures him of a place on the April-May tour to Caribbean - now it is up to him to decide if he wants to go.

Waugh has also captained Australia to a record 16 consecutive Test wins and has the best winning

suffered a groin strain while bowling during England's fifth Test win.

He is still expected to attend the match with the Bradman XI to be captained by his twin brother Mark, the ACB statement said.

Waqar assures better WC

INTERNET, undated

Pakistan captain Waqar Younis promised an improved performance from his team in the World Cup despite being comprehensively outplayed by South Africa.

They were beaten by an innings and 142 runs in the final Test at Cape Town to lose the series 2-0, and only managed one victory in five one-day internationals.

But Waqar insisted the tour had been a valuable learning experience.

"We've got a fair idea about the wickets here and all we've got to do is forget about this series now, gather ourselves again, and come back for the World Cup with a positive frame of mind," he said.

"It was a definitely a poor performance all round (in this match) with the bat, ball, and in the field."

"Looking at the series, we didn't really bat well at all, even in the one-dayers. We should have got respectable runs to fight for, and we didn't really get runs at all."

South African skipper Shaun Pollock was delighted by a "clinical" display from his team.

"A big score in the first innings set us up, and to bowl like we did in both innings was superb. I'm very proud of the guys and the way they played."

Their thoughts are also focused on the World Cup, with the team seeking to lift the trophy for the first time on home soil.

And Pollock urged the Cape Town crowd to turn up in force again for the Cup opener against West Indies on 9 February.

"We really do appreciate your support."

"We are definitely looking forward to our next outing, which will be on this ground in the World Cup, and I'm sure you'll be out to support us," he said.

Opening batsman Herschelle Gibbs was named Man of the Match for his 228 on the opening day, sharing an opening stand of 368 with Graeme Smith, who contributed 151.

"It was a really good wicket and we had to make the most of it."

"The more we stayed in, the more we geed each other up, and the more we enjoyed it."

Steve out of Bradman tie

AFP, Sydney

Australian Test captain Steve Waugh on Tuesday withdrew with an injury from the Bradman XI to play England in a one-dayer in Bowral, south-west of here, on Wednesday.

An Australian Cricket Board statement said Waugh had suffered a groin strain while bowling during England's 225-run fifth Ashes Test win at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

"It is a minor strain but it was felt prudent for him to miss the match to avoid the risk of increasing the severity of the injury," Australian team physiotherapist Errol Alcott said in the statement.

Waugh is still expected to attend the match with the Bradman XI to be captained by his twin brother Mark.

Meanwhile, Ronnie Irani will captain England for the first time in this match.

BAF athletics

ISPR, Dhaka

The inter-base athletics championship of the Bangladesh Air Force concluded at the Kurmitola Athletics ground on Monday.

BAF Base Zahurul Haque team clinched the championship trophy with 10 gold, 7 silver and 6 bronze medals followed by BAF Base Matiur Rahman team with 6 gold, 9 silver and 2 bronze medals.

Meanwhile BAF Base Matiur Rahman team emerged as the overall champion on for the year 2002.

Corporal Zahir of the BAF Base Zahurul Haque team was adjudged the best athlete of the meet.

Chief of Air Staff Air Vice Marshal Fakhru Azam witnessed the concluding day's events as chief guest and gave away prizes.

Cricket Olympics

ICC Cricket World Cup SOUTH AFRICA 2003

REUTERS, Cape Town

South Africa is thinking big for its first cricket World Cup with an Olympic-style opening ceremony that organisers say will be the biggest show of its kind the continent has ever seen.

"We want people to see just how special we are in South Africa," the ceremony's producer, Penny Jones, said animatedly, sitting in a makeshift chair in a warehouse rapidly filling up with zebras, buffaloes and chickens.

She said the Cricket World Cup launch would showcase South Africa's parks and Cape Town, one of the continent's top tourist draws, and would be a far cry from the problems of AIDS, poverty and violent crime which all too often grab the headlines abroad.

The two-hour spectacle, which she said would be broadcast live to up to 1.5 billion viewers around the world, would have everything from traditional dancers to techno music.

Jones, who had a hand in festivities at the last three Olympic Games, said Cricket World Cup chief Ali Bacher had been inspired by the opening show for the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

"(Bacher) sat in a seat in Sydney at the opening ceremony and he really witnessed the power of stadium theatre," Jones told this news agency.

"He persuaded his policy committee that this is the way to go. This is the way we can do a two-hour TV feed around the world celebrating South Africa, South Africans. It's got a basic tourism focus," she added.

Authorities hope to see the "Mother City" follow in the footsteps of Sydney and Barcelona, where tourism boomed after the two cities hosted the Olympic Games.

They also hope to help the coun-

try's bid to host Africa's first soccer World Cup in 2010, a race they are favourites to win. Success would complete a trio of world cups after the rugby union tournament in 1995.

Some 4,000 volunteer performers have signed up for the cricket ceremony on February 8, a day before the opening match.

Add to that around 12,000 costumes and props and you have the biggest show of its kind in Africa.

"We're very excited about it. We just missed the 2006 Soccer World Cup (bid), so this is the first opportunity in South Africa . . . to host a ceremony of Olympic-style scale," Jones said.

She hopes to avoid a repeat of the 1995 Cricket World Cup in India, when technical problems halted the opening show halfway through.

To realise her dream, Jones enlisted other stadium theatre experts, including designer Keith Anderson who has 50 years in show-business under his belt creating outfits for everything from circus acts to flamboyant shows at South Africa's lavish Sun City casino resort.

American choreographer Doug Jack is into his work on the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics opening ceremony. The Cape Town show will be a mixture of South Africa's 11 language and culture groups and spectacular nature reserves.

"The directors have taken a long time to pick which jewels in the crown we want to show off. It goes everywhere from driving techno music to beautiful orchestral music, to beautiful scenes of ocean life - and the land as well and the human spirit too," he said.

Jones said the show was based on a drive through South Africa, starting with a safari depicting Africa's "Big Five" - elephant, lion, rhino, buffalo and leopard.

The spectacle moves on with a burst of traditional African dance, directed by South African playwright Mbongeni Ngema, and classical

ballet paying tribute to South Africa's fragile marine life.

In case anybody forgets the excuse for the extravaganza, the grand finale will see the cricket teams marching on to the field with Cape Town's world-famous min-strels.

Yet television producer Mark West has to balance a 27-million-rand (3 million dollars) budget - a fraction of the cost of Olympic shows which have swallowed nearer 10 times that figure.

As stadium theatre goes internationally, we've got an incredibly small budget. It certainly is nothing like they have overseas. We are delivering a show which is world-class with the amount of money we've got," West said.

"A lot of people have come forward, major corporations have come forward, said 'yes, we'll help you' with small things . . . like rope and plastic. It all helps at the end of the day. People come to us and see the value of what it's going to do for the country, obviously," he said.

The team have also prided themselves on giving jobs and training to poor communities around Cape Town.

About 100 people from these communities have been hired to make some of the costumes and props and 4,000 out of a total 5,000 volunteers will be performing.

Volunteer Mduzire Mkhize, a 31-year old former construction worker who has designed and produced more than 100 costumes said he did not mind working for free.

"I've been learning a lot of things," he said.

"Already a lot of people want me to make me some stuff. They've seen some of the stuff that I've done. Already in the township, people are talking."

Contract row CAS-bound?

ICC Cricket World Cup SOUTH AFRICA 2003

AFP, New Delhi

The World Cup contracts row between India and the International Cricket Council (ICC) may go to the Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS) in Lausanne, Switzerland, reports said Tuesday.

India has refused to sign the contracts which prohibit cricketers from endorsing non-official sponsors for a month before and five days after the World Cup, and demanded a legal settlement to the dispute.

The ICC, already burdened by growing fears of playing in Zimbabwe, which co-hosts the World Cup with South Africa and

Kenya from February 8 to March 23, wants the Swiss court to arbitrate.

With only a week left before the deadline to sign contracts ends on January 14, the warring parties are running out of time to resolve the dispute.

By setting a January 14 deadline, the ICC has negated its own ruling that non-official endorsements have to cease 30 days before the tournament starts on February 8.

But any further concessions by the ICC or the official tournament sponsors, as demanded by India, are unlikely.

The Calcutta-based Telegraph newspaper reported Tuesday that the Global Cricket Corporation, which holds marketing rights for all events till the 2007 World Cup, had "categorically informed" the ICC that the sponsors will offer more concessions only if they are "compensated."

"In effect, that means they will themselves fork out less than what has been contracted. And, so, instead of 550 million dollars (through till 2007), the ICC could get around 480 million dollars," the newspaper said.

None of the other 13 participating nations are agreeable to a deduction in the sponsorship money, leaving India out in the cold.

The ICC insists India meet its contractual obligations after signing the Participating Nations Agreement (PNA) last year.

India argues its players cannot be expected to breach sponsorship deals which pre-date the PNA contract.

Most Indian stars, including Sachin Tendulkar and captain Sourav Ganguly, enjoy lucrative personal sponsorships which they may have to forego if the current World Cup contracts are adhered to.

Aftab steers Chittagong

FROM PAGE 13
316 for 8 in 91.4 overs)

Rashedul c Mortuza b Tariq 30
Jahangir b Ahsanullah 38
Mazharul lbw b Ahsanullah 33

Aminul c Aftab b Ahsanullah 41
Halim c Mortuza b Ahsanullah 2
Naimur c b Sabbir 39
Kadir c Aftab b Tariq 15
Fahim c Tariq b Ashique 60
Neeyamur not out 57
Mosaddek not out 37

Extras: (b-2, lb-10, nb-10, w-2) 25
Total: (For 8 wickets in 100 overs) 376

Fall of wickets: 1-39, 2-106, 3-108, 4-111, 5-173, 6-200, 7-219, 8-316

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Tariq	19	4	87	2
Ashique	17	6	43	1
Ahsanullah	30	2	97	4
Aftab	6	1	20	0
Sabbir	25	4	90	1
Faisal	3	0	20	0

CHITTAGONG: First innings

Nafis b Munir 29
Aftab c Fahim b Naimur 124
Azam lbw b Munir 0
Nazimuddin c Fahim b Naimur 36
Akram batting 24
Faisal c Kadir b Munir 12

Sabbir batting 0
Extras: (lb-2, nb-2, w-2) 6
Total: (For 5 wickets in 50 overs) 231

Fall of wickets: 1-60, 2-60, 3-189, 4-194, 5-230

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Munir	8	1	40	3
Neeyamur	5	0	29	0
Mosaddek	11	1	67	0
Fahim	12	2	37	0
Naimur	12	0	47	2
Aminul	2	0	9	0

Barisal v Sylhet

BARISAL: First innings (Overnight 290-7 in 92 overs)

Imran c Hadi b Nasir 22
Sadik run out 9
Nayan run out 59
Nahidul c Nayeem b Imran 15
Towhid c Rajin b Imran 23
Prosenjit b Nayeem 93
Faruque b Imran 11
Arman run out 6
Nadif not out 51
Anis c sub b Rajin 28

Extras: (b-12, lb-7, nb-5, w-6) 30
Total: (For 9 wickets in 100 overs) 347

Fall of wickets: 1-37, 2-46, 3-77, 4-138, 5-142, 6-162, 7-218, 8-295, 9-347

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Nayeem	19	5	69	1
Nasir	14	2	53	1
Parvez	15	2	40	0
Imran	23	4	66	3
Ejaz	11	3	40	0
Rajin	14	2	43	1
Tushar	4	0	17	0

Nayeem 19 5 69 1
Nasir 14 2 53 1
Parvez 15 2 40 0
Imran 23 4 66 3
Ejaz 11 3 40 0
Rajin 14 2 43 1
Tushar 4 0 17 0

SYLHET: First innings
Parvez lbw b Faruque 84
Sishir lbw b Nadif 34
Tushar lbw b Anis 7
Nasirul lbw b Nadif 18
Rajin c Sadik b Nadif 13
Hadi run out 2
Rana c Anis b Nadif 5
Nayeem batting 9
Ejaz c Anis b Arman 1
Imran batting 14
Extras: (b4, lb-8, w-2) 15
Total: (For 8 wickets in 81 overs) 201

Fall of wickets: 1-113, 2-132, 3-139, 4-140, 5-171, 6-176, 7-176, 8-179

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Anis	14	4	39	1
Faruque	17	4	28	1
Nadif	23	7	54	4
Arman	14	5	28	1
Pijush	11	2	57	0
Nahidul	2	1	3	1

Fifth one-dayer today

FROM PAGE 13
"I would have liked India to fire, but that was missing because of the wickets and the way they had played," said Fleming.

"We also played on the same pitches and did better. We have created areas where they have lost confidence, especially their batting unit. I think it was a great effort by our bowling unit and our planning to expose those areas."

Fleming said India were capable of providing a stiff competition and putting his team under pressure in the remaining games.

"The opposition has been written off, but I still think they are capable of providing a good competition. Our job is to keep playing well and try to achieve a few more things."