

India to play in England

AFP, London
India have agreed to play three one-day internationals in England next September, it was confirmed on Tuesday.

The second edition of the NatWest Challenge, which began this year with Pakistan's visit, will act as a warm-up for September's ICC Champions Trophy.

India's last tour of England included the 2002 NatWest Series, when they defeated the hosts at Lord's. The sides last met during the World Cup, when England fell to the eventual finalists by 82 runs.

FIXTURES
Sept 1: 1st ODI, Trent Bridge
Sept 3: 2nd ODI, The Oval
Sept 5: 3rd ODI, Lord's

Tigers' Windies

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"With India's arrival uncertain, there's no question of not touring the West Indies," the sources said.

It was learnt that top BCB officials are planning to go to Kolkata next week to meet Indian cricket boss Jagmohan Dalmiya and discuss about the future of the Indian tour.

The source also criticised Asghar for providing the media with premature information.

"We have not yet informed India that we might arrange a tri-nation tournament instead of playing a three-match one-day series. Only after India's consent would we have invited the West Indies."

Bangladesh kick off their tour of the Caribbean with three one-day internationals at Kingstown, St. Vincent on May 15 and 16 and at St. George's, Grenada on May 19.

The first Test is at Georgetown, Guyana from May 28 while St. Lucia will host the second Test starting from June 4 at the newly built Beausejour Stadium.

MSC muscles

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DHANMONDI LOSE AGAIN
In the other match, Dhaka Wanderers edged past the last year semifinalist Dhanmondi Club 3-2 at the Bir Sheshthra Shaheed Mustafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur.

Ritu opened the scoring for the winners in the fifth minute while Williams doubled the margin in the 18th minute but it was Yousef Khan who grabbed the match winner in the 82nd minute.

Aminul and Azizur scored for Dhanmondi in the 44th and 73rd minutes respectively.

SERIES SALAD
FROM PAGE 13
duled to leave Dhaka this morning on a 40-day tour of Sri Lanka, their second overseas trip this summer.

Meanwhile, a loyal band of English journalists and a hundred-odd colourful Barmy Army men and women, who accompanied the England team throughout the tour, have also packed their bags to leave the capital today in two parts or rather three to be precise!

One group is flying in an Emirates flight via Dubai to Colombo while the rest are going via Bangkok by Thai Airways. Meanwhile, Wisden's Andrew Miller, who have by now become an unofficial honorary Bangladeshi, is shedding tears of goodbye while planning his next stop in exotic Kuala Lumpur.

FRIENDS CHEERED!
The biggest cheer of the packed Bangabandhu National Stadium crowd was not for any Bangladeshi player yesterday.

Instead it was reserved for visiting ICC president Elcos Mani and chief executive Malcolm Speed who decided to take a lap around the BNS and meet the crowd from close. The gesture of the two topmost ICC officials, who have supported Bangladesh against every critic, drew rapturous applause from the home supporters.

19 Mary-Kate or Ashley in a way 21 TV forensics series 22 Personal 24 Past 26 Ripen 28 Top-notch squad 30 Bottom line 32 Old document 33 Bar woe supply 34 Follow relentlessly 36 Follow relentlessly 38 Key letter 39 One more time 40 Vigorous 42 Exhume 45 Big bash 46 Bart's sister 48 Edge 50 Lower-back muscle, for short 51 Stallone sobriquet

Hinds, Lara hit form

Cricket

AFP, Bulawayo

West Indies opening batsman Wavell Hinds smashed 81 runs off Zimbabwe as the visitors made a flying start to the first day of the second of two Tests here.

With Chris Gayle, who made a return-to-form 47, Hinds put on 73 for the first wicket before being joined briefly by Daren Ganga.

Then came Windies' captain Brian Lara, still smarting from a 29 and then only one run in the drawn first Test, the latter caused by a dubious leg before decision by Billy Bowden.

Lara immediately set about taking it out on the hapless Zimbabweans, who were bowling well but with little reward.

Hinds struck two sixes and a dozen fours before being stumped off Ray Price, stranded about a quarter of the way down the pitch. Ganga was dismissed for 23 runs and made way for Ramnaresh Sarwan.

But a sparse Bulawayo crowd had eyes only for Lara and they got the full repertoire of his shots.

Lara and Sarwan together took the tourists to 253 runs at the tea interval, in just 56 overs.

Lara, who had decided to bat after winning the toss, was on 64 and Sarwan 32.

With the West Indies are looking to restore pride after Zimbabwe came so close in the first Test to achieving only their eighth Test win in 12 years, the home side were learning that a week is a long time in Test cricket.

Lara's team, which will later feature Mervyn Dillon and Omar Banks in place of Vasbert Drakes and Jerome Taylor, have secured the initiative and will not easily relinquish it.

The captain's 42nd Test half century came in quick time and few would bet against him reaching his century before the close of play.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard at tea on the first day of the second Test between Zimbabwe and

Table with 5 columns: Player, Runs, Balls, Fours, Sixes. Includes West Indies and Zimbabwe players like Gayle, Hinds, Lara, Sarwan, Price, Ganga, Blignaut, Mahwire, Gripper, Sibanda, Veremeulen, Carlisle, Wishart, Matsikenyer, Taibu, Streak, Bagnout, Toss, Umpires, Bowler.



West Indies captain Brian Lara drives Zimbabwe's Blessing Mahwire on the first day of the second Test at Bulawayo yesterday.

Now Pakistan A touring India

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

Pakistan's second-string cricket team will tour India next month for a limited-overs tournament also featuring Sri Lanka, it was announced on Wednesday.

The tournament, organised by the Asian Cricket Foundation (ACF), will be held in the southern city of Bangalore from December 13-21.

It will be the first visit to India by Pakistani cricketers since the senior team under Wasim Akram played three Test matches in 1999.

The Indian government last month withdrew its three-year ban of bilateral cricket matches against Pakistan, paving the way for a Test series between the arch-rivals in Pakistan in March-April next year.

The Indian under-19 team won a four-nation tournament in Pakistan earlier this month.

In the ACF series in Bangalore, each team will play the other twice in the preliminary league with the top two advancing to the final on December 21.

SCHEDULE
Dec 13: India vs Sri Lanka
Dec 14: India vs Pakistan
Dec 15: Pakistan vs S Lanka
Dec 16: Rest day
Dec 17: India vs S Lanka
Dec 18: Pakistan vs S Lanka
Dec 19: India vs Pakistan
Dec 20: Rest day
Dec 21: Final

Akhtar in trouble

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar has been ordered to explain remarks reportedly made during a recent newspaper interview, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said.

Chief executive Rameez Raja said Shoaib had criticised his recent ban by the International Cricket Council in the interview with an unnamed Indian newspaper.

The 28-year-old also told the newspaper that he could become captain of Pakistan whenever he wants, Raja said.

Selection row flares up

Cricket

AFP/REUTERS, Lahore

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chief Tauqir Zia will meet team and selection chiefs Thursday in a bid to end a row over the squad announced for next week's series against New Zealand, an official said.

Zia will meet captain Inzamamul Haq, coach Javed Miandad and chief selector Aamir Sohail "to solve this unnecessary situation", PCB chief executive Rameez Raja told AFP.

Sohail came under fire from both Inzamam and Miandad after he announced the names of 22 probables last week for the series against New Zealand starting at Faisalabad on November 22.

"It is a problem of communication and I hope that once we all sit down it

would be solved because we won't allow such things to affect our preparations for the series," said Raja.

He said the public row between was damaging the image of the sport.

"They are not supposed to give statements against each other in the press. This only damages the spirit and image of Pakistan cricket," he was quoted by Reuters as saying.

The PCB has told Inzamamul, coach Miandad and Sohail to submit written statements following the affair.

Inzamam was angry at Sohail's decision to drop experienced off-spinner Saqlain Mushtaq and batsman Younis Khan.

"If I were consulted I would have suggested we need Saqlain and Younis' experience," Inzamam told reporters.

"I am not happy over the selection process and will talk to the chairman that in this way I can't do justice with the captaincy," said Inzamam, who won his first Test series as captain against South

Africa last month. Coach Miandad also slammed Sohail, saying he was against changing the winning combination that played well against South Africa.

Sohail defended his actions. "What I am doing is within the jurisdiction of my job and feel I am not wrong, it's unnecessarily blown up," he told AFP.

"We agreed upon 25 players last month to avoid any kind of unpleasant scenario and coach and captain were in that meeting, so now why fool people and go to the press," said Sohail.

"If Inzamam feels Saqlain should be in the probables, that's his opinion and if we can include Moïn Khan as 23rd player then Inzamam should have asked me to include certain players," the chief selector said.

Sohail would not quit his job. "Why should I quit? It's for the chairman to decide what is under his jurisdiction."

Viduka fine erased

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Gray's decision was seen as a final insult to Reid, who was sacked on Monday after Saturday's 6-1 thrashing by Portsmouth left the club further adrift at the bottom of the Premiership.

Although Reid clearly paid the price for Leeds's dismal start to the season, his bust-up with Viduka clearly did not help his chances of survival.

Gray has made it clear that he wants the Australian, who has been linked with a potential move to Italy in the January transfer window, to stay and help Leeds stave off relegation.

"I'll be having a chat with him to tell him what I think and what I expect from him," the former Leeds and Scotland fullback said.

"What I expect is for him to deliver more goals again for this club. That is what he is good at and that is what we

need in our current situation."

Gray confirmed that, provided he is still in charge, Viduka would be in the side that faces Bolton at Elland Road in the club's next match, on November 22.

Relegation would almost certainly force Leeds into administration. The club recently announced record losses of nearly 50 million pounds and is nearly 80 million pounds in debt.

The perilous nature of Leeds' finances means they could have difficulty attracting a new manager from a short-list of targets believed to be headed by Nottingham Forest's Paul Hart, a former director of the Leeds youth academy.

Southampton boss Gordon Strachan, a former Leeds player, and Sheffield United's Neil Warnock are also seen as potential candidates for what is arguably now the toughest job in English football.

Reeling under

FROM PAGE 13

"There is another two months to go before the Zimbabwe tour. I will be playing in the domestic first-class competition and working hard to be at the top of my game when the team is selected," said Mahmud.

England captain Michael Vaughan lauded all-rounder Andrew Flintoff's awesome contribution in the one-day matches.

"It was a special performance from him. I hope it carries on to Sri Lanka," said Vaughan.

The skipper was delighted with the Bangladesh trip.

"I thought we did everything we set out to do in Bangladesh and winning the Tests 2-0 and the one-dayers 3-0 was a wonderful effort from this inexperienced team."

But Vaughan admitted that the real test for his side's calibre will come against Sri Lanka, their next opponents.

"Going there and taking them on will be very tough. I believe the ultimate challenge for us will be the three one-day internationals there."

Vogts plays

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examining the former Hearts midfielder's stomach complaint.

The 31-year-old missed Wolves' 1-1 draw with Birmingham City at Molineux on Saturday, his stomach-muscle pull potentially linked to his misplacing his gumshield while on international duty with the Scots against Lithuania.

Cameron wears the gumshield to aid his balance and offset the effects of a long-standing pelvic problem.

"There are muscles on one side of my face that tense up and throw me off-balance which causes my pelvic problems."

Owen leaving

FROM PAGE 16

Gerrard, who took over the captaincy from Sami Hyypia last month.

"He has brought the club forward massively and I'm sure he will be here for many years to come. He has improved me as a player and I believe we are capable of winning trophies under him. I want to be part of that."

Liverpool lost out to Chelsea in the battle for Champions League qualification on the final day of last season.

SL warn England

Cricket

REUTERS, Colombo

England should expect a tougher time when they arrive for their tour of Sri Lanka on Thursday, according to home captain Hashan Tilla-karatne.

England won a Test series 2-1 in Sri Lanka in 2001 but Sri Lanka's Test captain Hashan Tilla-karatne argued: "In the last home series my assessment was that we did more to lose the series than England did to win it."

"This time we must be tougher...we will be looking for revenge," he told reporters.

Sri Lanka have yet to beat the English in a series, although they have won one-off Tests.

Michael Vaughan's side, who beat Sri Lanka at home 2-0 last year and who have warmed up with victory in Bangladesh, play three Tests and three one-dayers over the next six weeks.

"Our batting has not lived up to expectations during the past year and it's essential that we knuckle down to play with discipline and determination," Tilla-karatne added.

"The good news is that most of the batsman have found some good form in the current domestic tournament."

Sri Lanka hope to set the tone by dominating the one-day series at the start of the tour.

"It's important we hit the ground running and make a winning start," said one-day skipper Marvan Atapattu, looking ahead to next Tuesday's opening game.

BD-ENG SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the third and final one-day international between Bangladesh and England at Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday:

Table with 5 columns: Player, Runs, Balls, Fours, Sixes. Includes Bangladesh and England players like Hannan, Moniruzzaman, Habibul, Rajini, Mushfiq, Alok, Khaled, Khaled, Manjarul, Mohammad, Tapash, Extras, Total, Fall of wickets.

Result: England won by 7 wickets and lift the series 3-0. Man-of-the-match: Andrew Flintoff. Player-of-the-series: Andrew Flintoff. Toss: Bangladesh. Umpires: Aleem Dar (Pakistan) and Mahbubur Rahman (Bangladesh).

Table with 5 columns: Player, O, M, R, W. Includes England and Bangladesh bowlers like James Anderson, James Kirtley, Andrew Flintoff, Ian Blackwell, Gareth Batty, Rikki Clarke.

Table with 5 columns: Player, O, M, R, W. Includes Bangladesh bowlers like Marcus Trescothick, Vikram Solanki, Michael Vaughan, Paul Collingwood, Andrew Flintoff, Extras, Total, Fall of wickets.

Table with 5 columns: Player, O, M, R, W. Includes Bangladesh bowlers like Tapash Baisya, Mushfiqur Rahman, Khaled Mahmud, Manjarul Islam, Mohammad Rafique, Hannan Sarkar.

Result: England won by 7 wickets and lift the series 3-0. Man-of-the-match: Andrew Flintoff. Player-of-the-series: Andrew Flintoff. Toss: Bangladesh. Umpires: Aleem Dar (Pakistan) and Mahbubur Rahman (Bangladesh).

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Ferdinand's uncertain

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after leaving the training ground and so could not be summoned back to take the test that day.

Newspapers which claim to have obtained details of Ferdinand's phone records have reported that his mobile was switched on all afternoon and that his first communication after leaving the training ground was a text message to his private doctor, who had been treating him for a kidney infection.

Ferdinand, 24, maintains he has never used performance enhancing or recreational drugs.

A test which he took within 36 hours of the one he missed proved negative although that is unlikely to have much bearing on the final outcome.

The delay would have been long enough to allow a number of banned substances to be eliminated from the body.

The FA will also have to take into account the fact that Ferdinand has already suffered a degree of punishment after being forced to miss England's final Euro 2004 qualifier against Turkey in Istanbul last month.

His exclusion from the squad enraged his international team-mates, who briefly threatened to boycott the Turkey match over what they saw as conviction without trial.

The FA's action on Ferdinand follows the appointment of a new chief executive, Mark Palios, earlier this year. Palios had made tighter controls on drugs in football a top priority of his regime.

But the Ferdinand case has also placed him in a position of direct conflict with the club's wealthiest and most powerful club. United have made it clear they will fight any lengthy ban on Ferdinand.

United's case is likely to rest heavily on the precedent set last season when Manchester City player Christian Negouai missed a drugs test and escaped with a 2,000-pound fine.

That could be used as the basis for action through the courts although a decision by United to go down that road would risk incurring the wrath of FIFA.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with numbers 1-51.

CRYPTOQUIP
G'Z'X JXXO ACKU Q KCQU
CL ZXED LSOOD YACEGX Y
JSA ATXD'EX ACC TSICECSY
AC IXOAGCO
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN A GAME ENDS IN A TIE, I IMAGINE ONE COULD CALL THAT A NO-WIN SITUATION.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals N
The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.