



Did U Know?

Until the 1870s, baseball was played without the use of gloves.



Andrew Symonds

(Australian all-rounder)

"You owe me a beer."

To teammate Michael Clarke as he was leaving the field after he had been caught via a deflection off Clarke's boot in the match against Sri Lanka on Friday.

South Asia to make joint bid for 2011 World Cup

Bangladesh will also be a part



AFP, Lahore

Asia will make a joint bid for the 2011 Cricket World Cup with India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh agreeing to host the mega event, officials said on Saturday.

"The four Test nations from Asia have reached an understanding and a written bid will be made in the next few days," president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India Sharad Pawar told reporters here.

"We have discussed this matter jointly and we feel that given the massive following for the game in South Asia it is apt we bid jointly for the World Cup," Pawar said.

Pawar, who is in Lahore to witness the ongoing first Test between India and Pakistan, said he had discussed the bid issue with his Pakistani counterpart Shaharyar Khan.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) is expected to decide the host country in March and although it is Australia's turn to hold the event, Asia wants to organise every third World Cup.

Shaharyar said although

Australia was due to host the 2011 World Cup it had given an understanding it would withdraw in favour of a joint South Asia bid.

Pakistan and India jointly hosted the 1987 World Cup after the first three events in 1975, 1979 and 1983 were held in England.

Sri Lanka joined Pakistan and India as hosts of the 1996 tournament and England once again played hosts in 1999.

The 2003 edition of cricket's premier tournament was held in southern Africa and the next tournament in 2007 will be organised in the Caribbean.

Meanwhile, India and Pakistan announced they will have bilateral series every two years on the pattern of the traditional Ashes between Australia and England.

"India and Pakistan will play Test series every two years, but the number of Tests and one-dayers will be decided later," said Pawar.

Pakistan's Shaharyar said a two-year gap provided the right balance for series between the arch-rivals.

"We think that it won't be an overkill because the eagerness is there and we don't think the two-year period will kill the excitement," said Shaharyar.

Pakistan and India are also thinking on the lines of playing limited-overs matches at neutral venues every year for the next five years.

"We have offshore venues like Florida and New Jersey in the United States and some venues in the United Arab Emirates and we want to popularise cricket in these countries," Pawar said.

Both India and Pakistan will also play two charity matches to help victims of the devastating earthquake which shook both sides of Kashmir on October 8 last year.

"We will play the matches at a neutral venue in April this year and 75 per cent of the proceeds will go to earthquake victims of Pakistan and the rest to the people affected in India," Pawar said.

Both countries also decided to have more cricket at under-17 and under-19 levels.

"We want more cricket between the two countries and besides having more junior tours, the winners of India's premier first class tournament, Ranji Trophy and Pakistan's Quaid-e-Azam trophy will also play every year," said Pawar.

Mahanama due today



SPORTS REPORTER

International Cricket Council (ICC) match referee Roshan Mahanama arrives in the capital today to inspect the country's five cricket venues awaiting international recognition.

The former Sri Lanka batsman is however on a follow-up visit after an initial inspection by West Indies great Clive Lloyd, who came to Dhaka in November 2004 and called for upgrading the facilities in his recommendation to the game's ruling body.

During his five-day stay Mahanama will visit Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra, Khulna Divisional Stadium, Chittagong Divisional Stadium, Fatullah Stadium and the under-renovation Mirpur Stadium.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is desperately looking forward to

increase the number of the international venues ahead of the home series against Sri Lanka in February-March as they are now left with only one recognised Test venue (MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong) after forfeiting the right of the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

"This is an important visit of an ICC official for us because we are eagerly waiting for the approval of some new venues before the Sri Lankan cricket team arrive here on February 17 to play two Tests and three one-day internationals," said BCB joint-secretary Rafiqul Islam Babu.

"At the moment we are left with the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong. We are also holding back the itinerary of our home series against Sri Lanka for the approval of at least two more venues," said Babu, who is in charge of the grounds in absence of a permanent sub-committee.

The 40-year-old Mahanama will first visit the Shaheed Chandu

Stadium in Bogra on January 16.

"Clive Lloyd was impressed with the ground during his visit in 2004. The only logistic support unavailable at that time was a hotel of international standard in Bogra. But we have now built a beautiful hotel only a few kilometers away from the ground. The case was also the same with Khulna and I think Mahanama will be impressed with the under-construction hotel in the city," said Babu.

Babu was also hopeful about two other venues in Fatullah and Chittagong Divisional Stadium.

"We have been working at the two venues in line with the prescription of Lloyd. There are still some areas we are yet to give finishing touches to, but we hope it will not be a big problem to win Mahanama's heart," he added.

Although BCB general secretary Mahbubul Anam recently expressed his desire to hold the second Test between Bangladesh

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IN MARAUDING MOOD: Pakistan's Shahid Afridi lofts one over long-on on way to scoring an 80-ball 103 on the second day of the first Test against India in Lahore on Saturday.

'Sixes assault was planned'

BBC ONLINE, undated

Pakistan batsman Shahid Afridi revealed he made a conscious attempt to hit six sixes in a single over on Saturday.

Afridi went 6, 6, 6, 6, 2, 1 against Harbhajan Singh on Day Two of the first Test against India, as Pakistan racked up the runs on a placid Lahore wicket.

He said: "Before the over began I told my partner Kamran Akmal 'I am going for six sixes' so he had said 'good luck'."

"I tried to hit the fifth one over the mid-on area but the ball turned so it ended up going straight."

Nobody has ever hit six sixes in a Test match before.

Afridi was eventually dismissed for 103.

Afridi said: "Great performances from so many of my teammates gave me the opportunity to play my own game which is what I like."

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GANGULY SELECTION

India officials deny reports

BBC ONLINE, undated

India team officials have dismissed reports the Board of Control for Cricket in India instructed them to include former skipper Sourav Ganguly in the first Test in Pakistan.

The former captain was seen in animated discussion with coach Greg Chappell before the start in Lahore, but was selected in the team.

Indian team manager Raj Singh Durgapur said: "There was no pressure from the board to pick Sourav."

Runs rain in Lahore

Younis 199, Yousuf 173, Afridi 103, Akmal 102 no



AFP, Lahore

India were set for a gruelling struggle to save the first cricket Test here after Pakistan put on a scintillating display with the bat on Saturday.

Younis Khan missed a double-century by one run and Mohammad Yousuf, Shahid Afridi and Kamran Akmal posted hundreds as Pakistan piled up a mammoth 679-7 declared on the second day.

India, needing 480 runs to save the follow-on, were 65 for no loss in reply when stumps were drawn for the day 19 overs early due to fading light at the Gaddafi stadium.

Virender Sehwag showed none of the pressure that faces the Indians, smashing seven boundaries in an unbeaten 36 off 35 balls.

Captain Rahul Dravid, who preferred to open the innings in place of Sourav Ganguly, was 22 not out at the close.

The tourists return on Sunday hoping to bat out a major part of the remaining three days to avoid defeat at the start of the three-Test series.

Indian coach Greg Chappell admitted his team will not find it easy.

"I do not know of a team that

loses a Test after scoring 679 runs," the former Australian captain said.

Younis was run out for 199 and Yousuf hit 173 as Pakistan came close to their highest total against India of 699-5 at the same venue in 1989.

The pair put on 319 runs for the third wicket in just 270 minutes to set the stage for a spectacular run feast by the hosts.

Afridi then hit a blistering 103 off 80 balls and Akmal remained unbeaten on 102 before Pakistan captain Inzamam-ul-Haq closed the first innings shortly before tea.

Afridi plundered seven sixes -- four of them in successive balls off Harbhajan Singh -- and seven boundaries during his fourth Test century.

Akmal enhanced his growing stature as a batsman-wicketkeeper of promise by compiling his third century before Inzamam declared.

Younis, who ended the first day on 147 in Pakistan's score of 326-2, was run out trying to get to 200 with a risky single.

Younis charged down the wicket after patting the ball to mid-on and could not beat Harbhajan's throw as non-striker Afridi sent him back.

Younis, who scored a match-winning 267 in Bangalore on Pakistan's tour of India last year, hit 26 boundaries during his marathon innings lasting five hours and

30 minutes.

Yousuf smashed 21 boundaries and two sixes before he was stumped attempting another big hit against spinner Anil Kumble.

Kumble struck again in his next over by trapping Inzamam leg-before-for.

Pakistan slipped from 455-2 to 477-5 to give the Indian bowlers temporary respite before Afridi and Akmal resumed after lunch to pound the attack into submission.

Some 12,000 home fans were treated to glorious strokeplay through the day which saw Pakistan score 159 runs off 36 overs in the extended morning session and move from 500 to 600 in only 10.3 overs.

None of the Indian bowlers was spared the pounding, Kumble finished with 2-178 from 39.3 overs, Harbhajan went for 0-176, Irfan Pathan gave away 133 runs for one wicket and Ajit Agarkar took two for 122.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on the second day of the first Test between Pakistan and India at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Saturday:

PAKISTAN: First innings (over-night 326-2)

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Malik c Harbhajan b Pathan | 59 |
| Butt run out | 6 |
| Younis run out | 199 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Yousuf st Dhoni b Kumble | 173 |
| Inzamam lbw b Kumble | 1 |
| Afridi c Harbhajan b Agarkar | 103 |
| Naval not out | 102 |
| Akmal c Ganguly b Agarkar | 9 |
| Sami not out | 1 |
| Extras: (b-5, lb-12, nb-8, w-2) | 26 |
| Total: (For 7 wickets decl in 143.3 overs) | 679 |
| Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-136, 3-455, 4-456, 5-477, 6-647, 7-668 | |
| Did not bat: Akhtar, Kaneria | |

| Bowler | O | M | R | W |
|-----------|------|---|-----|---|
| Pathan | 32 | 4 | 133 | 1 |
| Agarkar | 24 | 3 | 122 | 2 |
| Ganguly | 6 | 1 | 14 | 0 |
| Harbhajan | 34 | 5 | 176 | 0 |
| Kumble | 39.3 | 2 | 178 | 2 |
| Sehwag | 6 | 0 | 24 | 0 |
| Tendulkar | 2 | 0 | 16 | 0 |

INDIA: First innings

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Sehwag not out | 36 |
| Dravid not out | 22 |
| Extras: (b-5, nb-1, w-1) | 7 |
| Total: (For no loss in 13 overs) | 65 |

To bat: Tendulkar, Laxman, Ganguly, Yuvraj, Dhoni, Pathan, Agarkar, Kumble, Harbhajan

| Bowler | O | M | R | W |
|--------|---|---|----|---|
| Shoaib | 5 | 2 | 14 | 0 |
| Naved | 4 | 0 | 23 | 0 |
| Afridi | 2 | 0 | 12 | 0 |
| Sami | 2 | 0 | 11 | 0 |

What to WATCH

- TEN Sports**
India vs Pakistan
First Test, Day Three
Live at 10:45 am
- ESPN**
Australia vs South Africa
2nd ODI, VB Series
Live at 9:13 am
- Sunderland vs Chelsea**
English Premiership
Live at 9:55 pm
- STAR Sports**
Wigan vs West Brom
English Premiership
Live at 7:25 pm
- Australian Open**
First Round
Live at 6:00 am (Monday)

Martyn hopeful of Test recall

AFP, Melbourne

Australian Test discard Damien Martyn has not yet given up hope of fighting his way back into the team for their upcoming tour of South Africa.

Although he admitted winning back his Test berth is a bit of a long shot, the 34-year-old batsman said here Saturday he felt fresher than he did three months ago, when he was dumped after a poor Ashes tour of England.

And it has shown in his batting. Martyn produced an excellent start to the limited-overs stage of the summer, having smacked 96 from 56 balls in last Monday's Twenty20 win over South Africa, and 70 from 64 in Friday's tri-series win over Sri Lanka.

Last year Martyn all but conceded his Test spot was gone for good, but now he is not so sure, aiming for at least a place as the reserve batsman in the Test squad. "I'm still looking to play both forms of the game and still keen to, and after this series if I can play well I'd love to go on that tour for both sides," he said.

"I haven't given up. I'm still contracted to play. I'm not retiring from Test cricket in that sense. "I admit that it's going to be hard to get back. There's a slight chance of getting back in. I've got to make a lot of runs and probably expect a few things to happen.

"It's not my main focus. If I get picked to go to South Africa, it will be a bonus and I'll just take it and go with it."

Although being dropped last September after 61 Tests was painful, Martyn said his break from constant travel had helped him refresh and refocus.

"After the Ashes tour and playing for so long in both forms you are tired and mentally probably a bit exhausted of being on the road and playing top-level cricket," he said.

"So being at home and playing state cricket and just being in your own house and doing normal things has freshened (me) up and it's freshened up the guys who don't play both forms."

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United suffer City ignominy



AFP, Manchester

Manchester United suffered arguably the lowest point of their domestic season as they lost 3-1 at Manchester City's Eastlands Stadium here Saturday.

United's third league defeat of this term left them 13 points behind leaders Chelsea ahead of the champions' match away to bottom-of-the-table Sunderland on Sunday. City moved up into eighth place, above Blackburn Rovers.

The 145th Manchester derby opened in uninspired fashion as the two teams felt each other out but that state of affairs altered dramatically just after the half-

hour mark.

Joey Barton's cross was headed clear by Gary Neville but Stephen Ireland capitalised on uncertain defending to thread the ball through for Sinclair to finish from ten yards.

City's second again highlighted United's awful defending. A long kick from James was easily headed over by Sinclair, outjumping Evra, and a deft touch by Cole played both United central defenders out of the game, permitting Vassell the opportunity to turn and convert from six yards.

United's plight was demonstrated by an incident towards half-time.

First, Rooney was cautioned for dissent after a prolonged complaint to Bennett over a foul he felt

he should have been awarded then, after the whistle sounded, Neville remonstrated with his team mate over the stupidity of the caution, earning an angry shove from Rooney in return.

Ronaldo's low left-foot shot was easily smothered by James at the foot of his post, Rooney shot just wide from the edge of the area after a flick from Ryan Giggs and a Ronaldo shot from wide on the right-hand corner of the area missed the target.

Finally, after Ronaldo's dismissal, van Nistelrooy gave United hope as he collected Giggs's cross and shrugged off the attention of Sun Jihai before slotting the ball through the defender's legs and in at the near post.

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United's Gary Neville (in front) and Albert Riera of City take a tumble following a tangle during the Manchester derby at the City of Manchester Stadium on Saturday.

Tri-series in India ahead of Champs Trophy?

CRICINFO, undated

A tentative agreement has been reached between Pakistan, India and Australia to play a triangular series in India during September, ahead of the Champions Trophy.

Shaharyar Khan, the Pakistan Cricket Board chairman, told Reuters that the three countries have held discussions about holding the event between September 12 and October 5.

The one sticking point would be that Pakistan is scheduled to host Zimbabwe in late September and, given the current situation in Zimbabwe, it is not known if the series will go ahead as planned.

The Zimbabwe team last month went on strike over pay issues and demanded the dismissal of Zimbabwe Cricket chief Peter Chingoka and its managing director Ozias Bvute.

India has recently stated its desire to arrange more series outside of the International Cricket Council future tours programme in order to maximise its income.

Matches against the likes of Australia and Pakistan are guaranteed to rake in big money from sponsors and television rights.



AFP, Brisbane

South Africa's injury woes worsened ahead of Sunday's tri-series clash with Australia as seamer Charl Langeveldt joined fast bowlers Andre Nel and Makhaya Ntini on the sidelines with a groin strain.

Langeveldt, 31, was able to bowl in the nets on Saturday but he was unable to shake off the problem which has hampered him since the end of the Test series.

Nel flew back to South Africa after being diagnosed with a stress fracture in his left foot and will miss the rest of the series also featuring Sri Lanka.

Ntini, who was sent home with a hamstring injury 11 days ago, is on standby for a surprise return pending a fitness test on Monday.

The latest withdrawal leaves South Africa woefully short of firepower ahead of their first match against the world champions, who humbled Sri Lanka by 116 runs in the series opener.

They will now turn to the inexperienced duo of Monde Zondeki and Garnett Kruger to support the more seasoned Shaun Pollock and Andrew Hall in attack.

All-rounder Justin Kemp

More injury worry for SA

(shoulder) is still in some doubt, although he is expected to be available to bat but not bowl.

But South African captain Graeme Smith cautioned against rushing Ntini back into action, despite the injury problems.

"The medical team here do feel he needs rest but the medical team back home are communicating and making a decision," Smith said after a training session at the Brisbane Cricket Ground, the venue for Sunday's match.

"It is risky to send Makhaya back out there."

"He is a match-winner and we'd love to have him every game but I think it's important for us to box clever."

"We would prefer if he's not 100 per cent to take the more conservative route with Makhaya."

Smith said it was crucial that South Africa had their best bowlers fit when Australia, who won the Test series 2-0, visit from the end of next month.

"We're really confident in our abilities to win the Test series back in South Africa," he said.

"Having our two strike bowlers, Nel and Ntini, fully fresh could be a blessing for us so we must box clever."

Smith said the injuries gave Zondeki and Kruger a chance to

prove themselves before the 2007 World Cup.

Australian captain Ricky Ponting was also wary of the threat provided by South Africa, who fell one short of equalling Australia's 2003 record of 21 one-day matches without defeat between February and November.

"Their one-day record is outstanding," Ponting said. "They got close to breaking our (unbeaten-stretch) record, they got very close to that against New Zealand over there."

"They are a good one-day side because they've got lots of those all-rounder-type players as well and they generally bat pretty low."

"So we'll expect a lot tougher challenge from them when we come up against them."

The South Africans are ranked second in the world behind the host nation and were the best one-day side of 2005, losing only three of 24 matches with an overall winning percentage of 75.

LIKELY TEAMS

AUSTRALIA: Ricky Ponting (captain), Adam Gilchrist, Simon Katich, Damien Martyn, Andrew Symonds, Michael Clarke, Michael Hussey, James Hopes, Brett Lee, Nathan Bracken, Glenn McGrath, Brett Dorey (supersub).

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