adjourned

Vermeulen trial

AFP, Harare

The trial of former Test player Mark Vermeulen, charged with arson attacks on the Zimbabwe Cricket's boardroom and training academy. was adjourned Wednesday after the prosecution failed to produce vital video evidence

The 27-year-old batsman, who played the last of his eight Test matches in 2004, faces two counts of arson and if convicted he faces 25 years in prison with hard labour.

He is accused of first trying to torch the association's boardroom at the Harare Sports Club ground in late October and then burning down the pavilion at the training academy the

following day. He is now set to appear on trial in February after defence lawyer David Dhumbura told the court in a letter that there was a delay with the video

He wrote: "To date we still have not

received a copy of the video footage on indications made by client."

Dhumbura said the state had undertaken to bring the footage before November 23.

"Consequently we have been unable to properly prepare our defence having regard to the fact that this matter is set down for trial on

December 6. "This is a serious and sensitive matter, we cannot afford ill-

preparation. The liberty of our client is at immense risk. The lawyer said his client required expert medical examination "both in

and outside 7 imbabwe in particular. "We will be seeking a medical report from Australia which report will describe the effects of a serious skull fracture which our client sustained in

Three years

January 2004," he said.

Prosecution counsel RS Ghai demanded the maximum sentence of 10 years behind bars and asked for bail to be turned down.

Sidhu's defence counsel argued the crime "happened on the spur of the moment" and that "this is a fittest case for imposing a fine".

"I am happy that the entire nation is with me," Sidhu told the Press Trust of India

He played 51 Test matches and 136 one-day internationals between 1983 and 1999, and is a popular cricket commentator known for his flamboyance and verbal dexterity

The sentence came the day after Indian coal minister Shibu Soren was jailed for life for conspiracy in the abduction and murder of a former aide, who was allegedly blackmailing the minister in a bribery scandal.

Both cases have sparked a major debate in India, where political parties regularly support candidates who face serious criminal charges.

"Sidhu is not only a politician but a celebrity cricketer. He endorses brands and comes on air. These are the rich and powerful being subjected to the rule of law," said political analyst Mahesh

"Particularly, Soren will have a major effect. This is a sitting cabinet minister being convicted for murder. He's getting life -- this is almost as tough as it gets," he added. Soren resigned as a minister after the verdict but has not stood down

WADA taking

The tribunal, headed by a former

judge, cleared both players of one ODI - during Bangladesh's tour of doping offences and lifted their Zimbabwe last August when his inclubans after finding them not guilty of sion beside Mashud drew criticism -taking the banned substance has not also been in form with the bat, nandrolone intentionally. having scored 85 runs from six innings Donze said WADA would first including a best of 29 in the ongoing

look into the decision of the tribunal before making further comments.

He said WADA had asked its representative in Pakistan to obtain copies of the judgement by the appeals tribunal

Shoaib and Asif were banned for two years and one year respectively last month by a drug inquiry tribunal. They were called back from the Champions Trophy in India after testing positive.

PCB chairman Nasim Ashraf is due to attend a meeting of the ICC board in Dubai this week, and PCB sources said they were expecting a strong reaction to the Shoaib and Asif cases from the other member countries, particularly Australia.

Australia has been criticised by WADA over its handling of Shane Warne's suspension in 2003 for

Windies' WC

Younis Khan, Shoaib Malik, Mohammad Yousuf, Abdul Razzaq, Kamran Akmal, Rao Iftikhar, Navedul Hasan, Mohammad Sami, Danish Kaneria, Umar Gul, Abdul Rehman

WEST INDIES (from): Brian Lara (captain), Chris Gayle, Lendl Simmons, Daren Ganga, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Runako Morton, Marlon Samuels, Dwayne Smith, Denesh Ramdin, Ian Bradshaw, Corey Collymore, Jerome Taylor, Daren Powell, Dave Mohammed



(L to R) Mina Amini, Sahra Zolghadr, Minoo Zargari and Saba Shayesteh of Iran compete in the women's four rowing final at the 15th Asian Games at the West Bay Lagoon in Doha on Wednesday.

China lengthen lead



Another world record was demolished by a Chinese lifter Wednesday as swimmers from the sporting

the Asian Games pool after stinging criticism from coach Zhang Yadong. Mu Shuangshuang smashed the world snatch mark on the way to winning gold in the +75kg category

giant worked to claw back pride in

ing to five the number of world records to fall in Doha. The 22-year-old double world silver medallist lifted 139kg to beat by 1kg the previous record set by South Korean Jang Mi Ran in May.

of the women's weightlifting, bring-

Jang had failed in her attempt to break her own record just minutes before Mu's successful effort, and she had a chance to win the event but bombed out at what would have been a record-equalling 182kg in the clean and ierk.

The 23-year-old double world champion had to make do with silver with Thailand's Annipa Moontar taking bronze.

Thailand's Pawina Thongsuk set a world mark in the clean and jerk of the women's 63kg category earlier in the week while China's Chen Yanqing produced three world records to win gold in the women's 58kg category.

young batsman has improved. So,

playing an international match would

 $help\,Rahim.\,We\,expect\,to\,give\,Rahim\,at$

least one match in the remaining of the

series," the former national captain

it won't create any pressure on him.

There have been mistakes but that is

not the reason to take another

wicketkeeper. The only problem

Mashud has is with the bat -- he is not in

understudy to the ever-present Mashud

for long, has not shown enough skill, he

Habibul Bashar (Captain), Shahriar

Nafees Ahmed (vice-captain). Khaled

Mashud, Aftab Ahmed, Mohammad

Ashraful, Mohammad Rafique,

Mushfiqur Rahim, Mashrafee Bin

Mortuza, Shahadat Hossain, Abdur

Razzak, Syed Rasel, Sakib Al Hasan

Farhad Reza and Mehrab Hossain.

Rahim, who has so far played just

has been repeatedly selected.

National Cricket League.

SQUAD

Although the 19-year-old Rahim, an

form. The rest would also serve him."

"Mashud is an experienced guy and

More records could fall later Wednesday when Iran's double

Rahim

Olympic weightlifting champion Hossein Rezazadeh, one of the strongest men on earth, enters the

fray. Nine Iranian lifters were banned for two years for testing positive just months before the Games but Rezazadeh, known as the Iranian Hercules, was not among them and he will compete in the heavyweight 105+ category here. Rezazadeh, who has won an

ncredible 10 gold medals at the world championships and holds the world records for the snatch (213kg) and total (472kg) as well as the clean and jerk, is the defending Asian Games champion. Midway through day five, China

had 67 gold medals to Japan's 18 and South Korea's 14. Kazakhstan, thanks to its shooters and weightlifters, has 10. While the Chinese have been

thumping allcomers across the

board, its swimmers have not lived

up to the high standards demanded by coach Zhang, who, like all competitors, has his eye on the Olympics in Beijing. Zhang set his team the target of winning four out of seven gold medals on Tuesday but they had to

settle for three, which didn't go down well "The morale of the team will be affected by that defeat," stormed Zhang. "It should not have hap-

Defending champion Qi Hui says she will deliver gold in the 200m breaststroke later Wednesday to add to her 400m

we've played (England, South Africa

and the Champions Trophy) and the

we've adapted very well. Right now

Although New Zealand's wickets

are now less of a mystery to the Sri

Lankans, having toured down under

for the past three years, Moody took

no chances by training the squad on

green, seaming wickets before

under no illusion about the chal-

lenge confronting them in a wel-

come diversion from a steady diet of

Test) they were probably at the start

of an upward curve. We beat them

quite comprehensively but it's

probably not a true reflection of the

side they are at the moment," said

incessantly searching for a reliable

top order, have brought back Craig

debut against the Australians, will

partner Jamie How as coach John

Bracewell opts for two specialists.

ending a trend of employing make-

But their records do not make

Cumming, who scored 74 on

Cumming and Mathew Sinclair.

New Zealand, who seem to be

"The last time we saw them (in a

New Zealand meanwhile are

conditions we've been through

the guys have no complaints."

FROM PAGE 17

eaving Colombo.

spinner Daniel Vettori.

SL look to change

individual medley gold medal.

She was fastest in qualifying but faces a strong challenge from Asami Kitagawa of Japan who won the 100m gold on Tuesday.

"In the 100m breaststroke there were many young swimmers so I did not enter the event," said Qi. "But in the 200m I have no problem Two Chinese are favourites for

another gold in the women's 100m freestyle. Pang Jia-Ying and defending champion Xu Yanwei should be battling for honours.

Reiko Nakamura of Japan is the favourite in the 100m backstroke. Meanwhile, South Korean

teenager Park Tae-Hwan could win a third individual title in the 100m men's freestyle. After giving up golds to North

Korea, South Korea and Japan in the gymnastics routines on Tuesday, China's world champion team will be hungry to reassert their dominance on Wednesday. The men's vault, parallel bars

and horizontal bars will be decided, while the women will vie for the beam and floor exercise titles.

On the rowing course, five gold Wednesday were divided between China, Uzbekistan and Japan, while on the shooting ranges China took four titles and Kazakhstan Elsewhere, China, led by world

No.4 Ding Junhai, will cue off for the snooker team title against Hong

flash reading with Cumming having

an average of 26 from five Tests and

selection and last played -- unsuc-

cessfully as an opener -- against

Australia in Adelaide in November

bowler Kyle Mills sees lain O'Brier

recalled to bolster the pace battery

NEW ZEALAND: Stephen Fleming

(captain), Craig Cumming, Jamie

How, Mathew Sinclair, Nathan Astle,

Jacob Oram, Brendon McCullum

Daniel Vettori, James Franklin,

Shane Bond, Chris Martin, Ian

SRI LANKA (from): Mahela

Jayawardene (captain), Kumar

Sangakkara, Sanath Jayasuriya,

Upul Tharanga, Tillakaratne

Dilshan, Chamara Kapugedera,

Chamara Silva, Prasanna

Jayawardene, Farvez Maharoof

Chaminda Vaas, Lasith Malinga,

Dilhara Fernando, Akalanka

Ganegama, Muttiah Muralidaran.

O'Brien (12th man to be named).

spearheaded by Shane Bond.

TEAMS

An untimely knee injury to swing

How averaging 12.

Lara wants respect for the verdict

REUTERS, Faisalabad

SPÖRT

West Indies captain Brian Lara urged respect on Wednesday for a decision by the Pakistan Cricket Board to clear bowlers Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif of doping and said he hoped there would not be a negative reaction.

"We must respect the decision of the Pakistan board. They are people of integrity in there," Lara told a news conference before the second one-day international on

"I just hope that the negativity surrounding this case does not spiral into anything else," he said.

An appeals tribunal, headed by a former judge, cleared Shoaib and Asif on Tuesday and lifted their two and one-year bans after finding them not guilty of intentionally taking the banned substance nandrolone.

Lara said it was important for Pakistan and world cricket that the issue was closed. "I think this is good for Pakistan cricket and also for next year's World Cup," he said.

Pakistan cantain Inzamamul Haq said he would not like to see Akhtar and Asif rushed back into international cricket.

"I think realistically they will be with us on the tour to South Africa in Jan. They should be allowed to play some domestic cricket to get back into the swing of things," he

Bangladesh win FROM PAGE 17

Bangladesh Football Federation

vice-president Sirajul Islam Bachchu said: "Vietnam had more speed and power than us. We lost because of silly mistakes. Our main central defender Rajani went off njured at half-time and the substitution (Siraji) was not that good." Also on Tuesday, Uzbekistan

and Korea progressed to the quarterfinals.

Uzbekistan beat Jordan 3-1 at the Al-Gharrafa Stadium for their third successive victory in the tournament to head Group A with maximum nine points. In Group B, Korea's 1-0 victory

over Bahrain at the Al-Rayyan Football Stadium set a new Asian Games record for clean sheets. It was the seventh successive match in the men's main tournament where they have not conceded. The last time a team scored

against them was when Korea defeated Oman 5-2 at Busan 2002. The previous record was six, held by Iraq, which they achieved from 1982 through to 1986. Bahrain have six points and

were kept waited to know whether they are one of the two best runners-ups to qualify for the

Nedved issues

FROM PAGE 20

for the club demoted to the second division after their role in the matchfixing scandal with a number of key players including captain Alessandro Del Piero and French striker David Trezeguet sidelined

tried to claw a way back into the

With Sunday's crucial Premiership clash against Arsenal in mind and his side in total control, Mourinho took off Shevchenko and Robben midway through the second

duced a fine low finish from the edge of the area in the 83rd minute as the visitors ran out of steam.

Barca show

they had been lucky to escape as the Germans rebounded in the second half.

the first half, which was very important, and took the chances which came our way," said the Dutchman, who is unbeaten in European competition at home since taking the job in mid-2003. Meanwhile, a header from

stand-in skipper Christian Panucci after 13 minutes secured Roma's spot in the next round at their Olympic Stadium.

point from the tie to secure their place in the next round behind Valencia. "It's an important win for us,"

"We'd prepared well for this match and it paid off. We were also lucky because Valencia were already through. The team worked well and we're savouring our quali-

Pace awaits India

Cricket

AFP, Potchefstroom

India will have the benefit of playing on one of the best batting pitches in South Africa as they warm up for a Test series against the host nation -- but they will also have to deal with another battery of fast bowlers.

The Rest of South Africa team which faces the Indians in a four-day match starting Thursday includes Mornantau Hayward, one of the fastest bowlers in the country, and Morne Morkel, a rising star who has been tipped for Test honours soon, as well as Garnett Kruger, who has been on the fringes of the national squad for the past two seasons.

The Indians go into the warm-up match low on confidence after being beaten 4-0 in a one-day series during which they failed to deal competently with the South African fast bowlers.

Hayward, 29, played in 16 Tests up until 2004. He fell out with the country's administrators early in 2003 when it was revealed, while he was playing in a Test against Pakistan, that he had signed a contract with English county first call on his services, ahead of his

One of South Africa's more volatile cricketers, Hayward has been in good form for the Warriors franchise team this season and the Indians can expect to deal with plenty of fast, shortpitched bowling from him.

Morkel, 22, is the taller and younger brother of Albie Morkel, who played for South Africa in a Twenty20 international in Johannesburg last Friday.

Whereas Albie Morkel has become known for his big-hitting feats, Mome is an out-and-out fast bowler, who has been one of the most impressive performers in franchise cricket since being promoted to the Titans team midway through the domestic one-day competition this season.

Kruger, 29, toured Australia with the South African team last season without playing in a Test match and has been a consistent wicket-taker at domestic level. Provided they can weather the first

bursts of the fast men, it could be ideal preparation for the tourists, who play the first of three Tests against South Africa in Johannesburg from December 15 to 19.

The pitch at Potchefstroom consistently yields high scores and will be a

chance for the Indian batsmen to play themselves into form. The Indians have been strengthened by the inclusion of experienced batsmen VVS Laxman and Sourav Ganguly in their Test squad. They will

join Sachin Tendulkar, Virender

Sehwag and the currently injured

captain Rahul Dravid to form a poten-

tially solid core of batting for the series.

REST OF SOUTH AFRICA: Jacques Rudolph (captain), Alviro Petersen, Morne van Wyk, Jean Paul Duminy, Vaughn van Jaarsveld, Justin Kemp, Vernon Philander, Paul Adams, Morne Morkel, Garnett Kruger, Mornantau Hayward.

INDIA (from): Rahul Dravid (captain), VVS Laxman, Virender Sehwag, Wasim Jaffer, Gautam Gambhir, Sourav Ganguly, Sachin Tendulkar, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Dinesh Karthik, Munaf Patel, Zaheer Khan, Shanthakumaran Sreesanth, VRV Singh, Irfan Pathan, Anil Kumble, Harbhajan Singh

Pak greats slam ban lift

ments they were taking did not contain

decision and any reservations from the

International Cricket Council (ICC) or

World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)

But Raia said there were technical

He said the initial doping tribunal

that banned the pair was told to work

under WADA and ICC rules but the

appeals committee worked under

local PCB rules "and found that 'get-

away clause' which cleared the two

Raia. now a television commenta-

The PCR said it was satisfied with the

banned substances.

would not affect the players.

flaws in the whole process.

Cricket

Former Pakistan cricket greats Wednesday said the decision to overturn a doping ban on fast bowlers Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif would be tough to explain to the cricketing world.

"I think for the outside world it becomes an eyewash, the same as I see it. I am happy for the bowlers but it has become a controversial issue," excaptain and former Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chief executive Rameez Akhtar and Asif won their appeals

by a 2-1 majority on Tuesday. Akhtar had been banned for two years and Asif for one year in November following their positive tests for the banned steroid nandrolone The appeals committee, headed

by retired judge Fakhruddin Ibrahim,

concluded that the players honestly

believed that the nutritional supple-

tor, blamed the PCB for the whole "I think they have messed up the whole issue and once again Pakistan

is in focus for wrong reasons. You need to convince others about the decision," said Raja

Mohammad, said Pakistan had

become a laughing stock in the cricket

Another former captain, Mushtaq

"There was no need for this whole doping drama," he said. "A competent committee was chosen to deal with the quilt and now suddenly the second

committee overturned the ban."

Pakistan.

But Mohammad said Akhtar and Asif's return would strenathen Pakistan's bowling. "I am glad for the boys," said Mohammad, one of four Mohammad brothers who played for

Former fast bowler Sarfraz Nawaz said the PCB "needs to apologise to the nation. They must share the reports of tests with the public."

Nawaz hoped that world cricketing authorities would back the decision.

"I hope that since the tests were conducted by the PCB internally the ICC and the WADA will accept the new decision, but it will be tough to convince them.

The PCB said both Akhtar and Asif were free to play but the duo would first feature in domestic competition to get fit for international matches.

British press gives up

Cricket

AFP, London

Just two Tests into the five-Test series, the British press on Wednesday largely conceded the Ashes to Australia after England crashed to a spectacular defeat at the Adelaide Oval.

The hosts came from behind to win by six wickets, going 2-0 up in the best-of-five series with three to play, leaving England with a mountain to climb in their battle to retain

The Daily Telegraph pointed out that when England held on to win the second Test of last year's series, then captain Michael Vaughan had said that if England had "gone 2-0 down. I don't think we'd have come back from that."

England faces, and former captain Geoffrey Boycott was unconditional in his declaration: "Make no mistake about it, the Ashes are gone." "If you support England, don't

kid yourself that they might come

back," Boycott wrote in the

Yet that is the deficit that

Telegraph. The Sun's match report was similarly downcast, saying that "the Ashes, won so spectacularly last year, have effectively now been surrendered.'

"Realistically, England can achieve little more than damage imitation in the remaining three

The tabloid. Britain's best-read daily, even published a "Timetable of shame", recounting the exact

timings of the English wickets that

fell, and the Australian runs that

genius of Warne, and a needless run-out -- that reliable catalyst for many a cricket calamity -- combined to turn England's almost fireproof position overnight into a defeat as deeply disappointing as any in living memory." lan Bell's run-out, part of a

norrible mix-up, was accompanied

by a strong performance from Test

cricket's greatest wicket-taker,

who claimed 4-49 off 32 overs, to

The Times, meanwhile, summa-

rised the fifth day's action at

Adelaide neatly in its match report,

when it said: "Too much caution, the

spark the English slide, with the tourists losing their last nine wickets for 60. According to the newspaper, the

Australians "seized the second Test on the final day in the manner of commandos raiding by night.

Spoils shared at Allianz

Kahn's crossba

won the match

But Inter, who last won the European Cup back in 1965, looked far from championship material playing on the counter attack despite needing a win to top

Bayern enjoyed long spells of possession but rarely looked like scoring until the 39th minute when Makaay had a clear opening but he lost his footing at the crucial moment and dragged his shot

Italian league leaders Inter had done little to threaten the home goal but with the half-time whistle

approaching Mariano Gonzalez struck a 25-yard effort against

In the second half Bayern upped the tempo and in the 62nd minute Makaay showed great control to take a pass in his stride and slot past goalkeeper Francesco Toldo.

Vieira levelled in stoppage time but although it was irrelevant that did not stop Kahn from venting his frustration at being denied a clean "I'm very happy with this result

because it's not easy to impose

yourself against Bayern on their

home turf," said Inter coach

Mancini admitted that it was a

difficult task for the Serie A leaders to have not one eye on Europe and the other on domestic action. "I wanted to give a chance to

those who had played less this

season because we have four difficult matches left between now and the end of the year so it's only logical to let those who have played more rest," he said. "I don't want to choose between

the Serie A and the Champions league, it's our duty to stay in the

Delving into the defeat from Australia, they have been

shift openers.

problems but Steve Harmison has taken one wicket in two Tests while both (Ashley) Giles and (James) Anderson have struggled.

taking 20 wickets. That is my biggest issue. Harmison has improved slightly but he has only taken one wicket in the series. "This will be England's biggest

"And we are not looking like

task ever. We have Collingwood, Pietersen and Ian Bell scoring runs but no-one else," grumbled the Fellow former England skipper Nasser Hussain said Fletcher's

his reign. "He will come under the immense pressure in the next week or so," Hussain said, according to London's Evening Standard news-

men now faced the "biggest test" of

"His selections have let him

down and let England down in Giles and Jones. There have been no runs and no wickets and Giles dropped a crucial catch (when Australia captain Ricky Ponting was on 35 before making a first innings 142).

"The coach has got to get his thinking cap on and work out how to get 20 wickets. It will be a difficult time for Fletcher and a difficult time for England." Former all-rounder Ian Botham insisted Fletcher had to wield the

axe ahead of the third Test in Perth, and wondered whether Panesar would finally be deployed. "I am asking questions. A lot of people are asking questions. Is Monty Panesar here or has he gone

home?" a perplexed Botham said. "I am totally confused. I was confused at the start of the series and I am even more confused now. "I am not taking anything away

magnificent, but we have two players who have hardly played any cricket in a year -- Jimmy Anderson and Ashley Giles, two key bowlers." David Gower added: "England

will find it very hard to believe there is a way back now. Having been 551 for six declared, a man scoring a double century (Collingwood), another man scoring 158 (Pietersen), a man taking seven wickets (Hoggard) -- how they ended up on the losing side is anyone's guess." Michael Atherton said current

captain Flintoff would have learnt a harsh lesson from the defeat. "For large parts of this game

England haven't played badly. It's a great lesson. You can play as well as you like but one bad session can lose you a Test match,"

Sinclair, who famously made 214 on debut against the West Indies in 1999. has rarely been an automatic

Nedved's ban comes at a bad time

Chelsea clinch

FROM PAGE 20

Levski keeper Mitrev almost presented Carvalho with a goal just before half-time when he made a hash of Lampard's cross, but the Portuguese defender's shot was blocked on the line by Stanislav

Chelsea were unlucky not to get a penalty when Mitrev crashed into Drogba. But Wright-Phillips pro-

FROM PAGE 20

"I think we played very well in

The Italians had needed just a

said Roma coach Luciano Spalletti.