

PM buys cricket ticket

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday inaugurated the sale of tickets for the two one-day exhibition cricket matches between Bangladesh and Pakistan to be held here on January 23 and 24, reports BSS.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia inaugurating the sale of tickets by purchasing a ticket from chairman, Bangladesh Cricket Control Board Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman at her office in Dhaka yesterday for the two one-day exhibition cricket matches between Bangladesh and Pakistan to be held in Dhaka on January 23-24. — PID photo

BCCB announces squad



With the appointment of Faruque Ahmed as the skipper of the national cricket team being a long settled issue, bur-ly Akram Khan's selection as his deputy was the pinched presence of novelty in the twenty-member Bangladesh team for the upcoming exhibition matches against Pakistan as well as the ICC Trophy, announced by the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board yesterday.

Almost all the names mooted during the long drawn out preparatory programmes, spanning over the last three months, are there with young left-arm spinner Sharfuddinul Haque and batsman Saikat finally winning the nod of coach Mohinder Amarnath, the former Indian Test cricketer contracted by the BCCB with a view to giving Bangladesh, an associate member of the ICC, maximum leverage to qualify for the next World Cup as one of the three top finishers of the ICC Trophy starting in Kenya from the next month.

With the ICC deciding to widen the horizon for its associate members by proclaiming provisions for three teams from the lower tier to fight their way into the big league of the nine Test-playing countries in the World Cup '96, scheduled to be co-hosted by India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, this year's ICC Trophy, the prime competition among the associate members of the International Cricket Conference (ICC), is being deemed quite justifiably as a magnificient scope for staking higher claims internationally as well as for haute vulgarisation of the game at home.

While Akram Khan's appointment as the vice captain aroused wee bit of pleasant surprise since quite a few other cricketers — seniors like Golam Nawsher Prince, Athar Ali and Enamul Huq Moni to mention among the chosen's contemporaries — were tried fleetingly during the prep tours of Sri Lanka, India, Hong Kong and Pakistan, the emergence of Saikat meant the end of younger Al Shahrari's dreams of a boarding the Kenya-bound aircraft. His winnowing out of the final list of 20 means Bangladesh will have on one around to turn to for a wrist spin, normally regarded a difficult proposition for relatively inexperienced batsmen, who are not particularly wonted to the art of playing against spin. Not that Rokon was a big 'breaker' but one feels sorry for the young man, who has almost all the requisites — good throwing arm, safe pair of hands, quick movement and effective batting — for the instant variety of the game.

For sheer usefulness Mahbubur Rahman Selim (not kept in the final 20 though taken to a couple of tours) would have been proved most handy. Unlike Rokon, whose height does not really allow him to conjure the tantalisingly disturbing loop for the right hand batsman, Selim, who is a competent top-order batsman and a fairly good fielder too, is ideally built to cause that aerial confusion for the batsmen. It is no hypothesis. Selim, who has been, for the most part of his career subject to poor handling by his captains, has proved his utility in the limited roles given to him as a bowler.

Although the authorities have left little room for controversy not allowing themselves to be carried away by

THE SQUAD

KZ Islam (chef de mission), Reza-e-Karim (manager), Golam Faruq Aju (assistant manager), Faruq Ahmed Akram Khan, Minhaazul Abedin Nannu, Aminul Islam Bulbul, Enamul Huq Moni, Athar Ali Khan, Jahangir Alam, Golam Nawsher Prince, Saiful Alam, Jahangir Dulu, Nasir Ahmed Nasu, Sharfuddinul Haque Saikat, Selim Shahed, Shahnazwaz Shaheed Shanu, Mizanur Rahman Babul, Sajid Hassan, Mohinder Amarnath (coach), Atauul Huq Mullik (umpire).

Age catches up with Zico



TOKYO, Jan 18: Soccer legend Zico plans to leave his Japanese club and return to Brazil, saying that at 40 he no longer has the strength to play on, a Japanese tabloid reported today, reports Reuter.

Zico spat on the ball as it lay on the penalty spot to shoe his disgust at the referee's decision. He was promptly sent off for his second bookable offence of the match. A league disciplinary committee is scheduled to meet on Thursday, and Zico is widely expected to be punished. "This has nothing to do with (that) incident," he said.

Zico clearly committed a crime. I am very sad that something like that happened at a top event. For that moment I completely lost my sense of reason," he said. "I've only lost my head like that four times before in my footballing life — twice playing for Flamengo and twice playing for Brazil. But that was always because of other players, never because I was angry at a referee's decision."

Advertisement for 'Coke-Go for Goal' featuring FIFA and Coca-Cola logos. Text includes: 'OPENING CEREMONY', 'Coke-Go for Goal', 'BANGLADESH', 'Organised by: BANGLADESH FOOTBALL FEDERATION'.



Jack Gallagher, a FIFA coach speaking at a press conference in connection with the start of a Coca Cola sponsored Coke-Go for Goal programme for coaches at Hotel Sheraton yesterday. — Star photo

Sher-e-Bangla Cup soccer

Hosts Feni DSA reached the zonal semi-final on the 18th Sher-e-Bangla Cup National Football Championship defeating Rangamati DSA and by 3-0 goals in the inaugural match at the Feni Stadium yesterday, reports UNB.

Shimu, Mizan and Manik scored one goal each for Feni to meet Bandarban DSA in the zonal semifinals on Friday.

Thomas and Basu of Rangamati, and Manik of Feni were shown yellow cards. Feni DSA: Selim (Ripon), Mizanur, Mahik, Ata, Shahzada, Ratan (Zakir), Biplob, Zallani, Sufat, Shimu and Ahmedullah.

Michel's new job

YAOUNDE, Jan 18: Henri Michel, France's national manager from 1984 to 1986, has been named Cameroon's World Cup manager, reports AFP.

Michel, capped 58 times by France, said he believed Cameroon could go a long way in the US tournament.

"I have a good idea of what the team should be," he added. He has not yet signed a contract but said it was secondary to arranging a fixture list of friendlies and dates for a training camp.

Omer Nguewa, Cameroon chairman of selectors, told Michel "We want results. You have taken possession of what is most prized by Cameroon."

Coke — Go for Goal kicks off

The football-coaching clinic "Coke — Go for Goal" began in Dhaka yesterday, reports BSS. State Minister for Finance Mujibur Rahman inaugurated the weeklong clinic at a local hotel as the chief guest.

Vice president of Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) and Secretary of the Ministry of Youth and Sports M Azizul Huq, Coca-Cola representative Khalid Raja, BFF General Secretary Sheikh Akmal Hossain and FIFA coach Jack Gallagher spoke on the occasion.

The Coke — Go for Goal programme, the first of its kind in South Asia, is already well-established in countries around the world. In Asia, it has been used for some years in Japan, South Korea, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia.

Gallagher said "the programme is the best training kit ever devised for young players. But its success will depend on the support of parents, who encourage their children to play the game, the teachers and coaches who will use the programme, and the media to help promote the project to ensure its success."

In all 30 physical instructor/football coaches from different schools of 30 districts are taking part in the programme, which will continue for at least seven or eight years in Bangladesh.

The programme will feature short distance interpassing and interchanging, dribbling, ball control, instep kicking, heading, attacking, defending principles and goal-keeping.

Div II cricket

Ashraf's century helped Bangladesh Boys record a massive 110-run win over Azad Boys in the Second Division cricket league at the Dhan-mondi Club ground yesterday. Sent in to bat first, Bangladesh Boys piled up 257 runs in 38.5 overs. Ashraf, who scored the third century of the season, hit nineteen boundaries in his 128-run innings off 120 balls.

Tutu and Kamrul were the other notable batsmen with scores of 41 and 23 respectively. Extras contributed 31 runs.

Farid took two wickets for 35 for Azad Boys. Six Bangladesh Boys batsmen were run-out. Chasing a huge victory target of 258 runs, Azad were bundled out for 147 runs in 37.3 overs.

Mihir top-scored with 60. Farid and Shabbir made 20 and 19 respectively. Russel, bagging four wickets for 19, was the most successful Bangladesh Boys bowler.

England A hold on

BLOEMFONTEIN, South Africa, Jan 18: England A batsman John Crawley sparked a storm here on Monday after scoring a controversial match-saving century against Orange Free State, reports AFP.

Crawley refused to walk after scoring just two — before admitting later he should have been given out. The young Lancashire player ended with 128 off 175 balls, his second ton of the trip, to help England to 321 for five after the tourists had been set 453 for victory at Springbok Park.

Crawley's century was greeted by a stunned silence from the Free State fielders, who were sure he had edged a catch behind off Bradley-Player. Umpire Willie Wilson gave Crawley the benefit of the doubt — but the batsman, who hit seven fours while occupying the crease for just over three hours, admitted afterwards he thought he had got a nick.

The row was made worse since Free state's Mickey Arthur had walked on Sunday, even though Umpire Cyril Mitchell and given him not out after an appeal for caught behind. The captains agreed to cut Monday's play short with 13 of the 20 overs in the final hour still to be bowled.

The other batsmen who did well Monday were captain Hugh Morris, who scored 64 in three hours before being trapped leg before by Nicky Joze, and Alan Wells, who was brilliantly run out by Louis Wilkinson for 46. Boje took three for 89 off 35 overs.

Rackemann rages

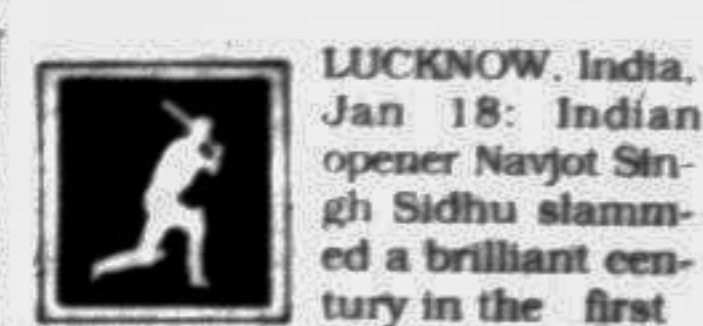
BRISBANE, Jan 16: Queensland crushed Victoria by 194 runs here today to move within six points of Sheffield Shield cricket leaders New South Wales, reports AFP.

The Queenslanders bowled Victoria out for 212 in their second innings, taking the full six points to lift their season's tally to 14, only 5.8 behind leader NSW with three games to play.

Veteran paceman Carl Rackemann captured 5-32 in the Victorian second innings, while batsman Matthew Hayden continued to break records. Hayden scored his sixth century in seven innings when he finished with 155 earlier today.

He also scored a century in the first innings, the second time this year he has had two hundreds in a match. Queensland 347 and 331 (M Hayden 155, S Law 76) beat Victoria 272 and 212 (B Hodge 64, C Rackemann 5-32) by 194 runs.

Sidhu leads Indian charge



LUCKNOW, India, Jan 18: Indian opener Navjot Singh Sidhu slammed a brilliant century in the first Test against Sri Lanka Tuesday, narrowly missing a 62-year-old world record, reports AFP.

Sidhu made a masterly 124 as India, electing to bat first on a lifeless wicket, piled up 269 for three by close of the opening day's play at the Babu Stadium here.

The tall 30-year-old Sikh blasted eight sixes and nine boundaries — just two sixes short of Englishman Wally Hammond's world record of 10 sixes in a Test innings against New Zealand way back in 1932.

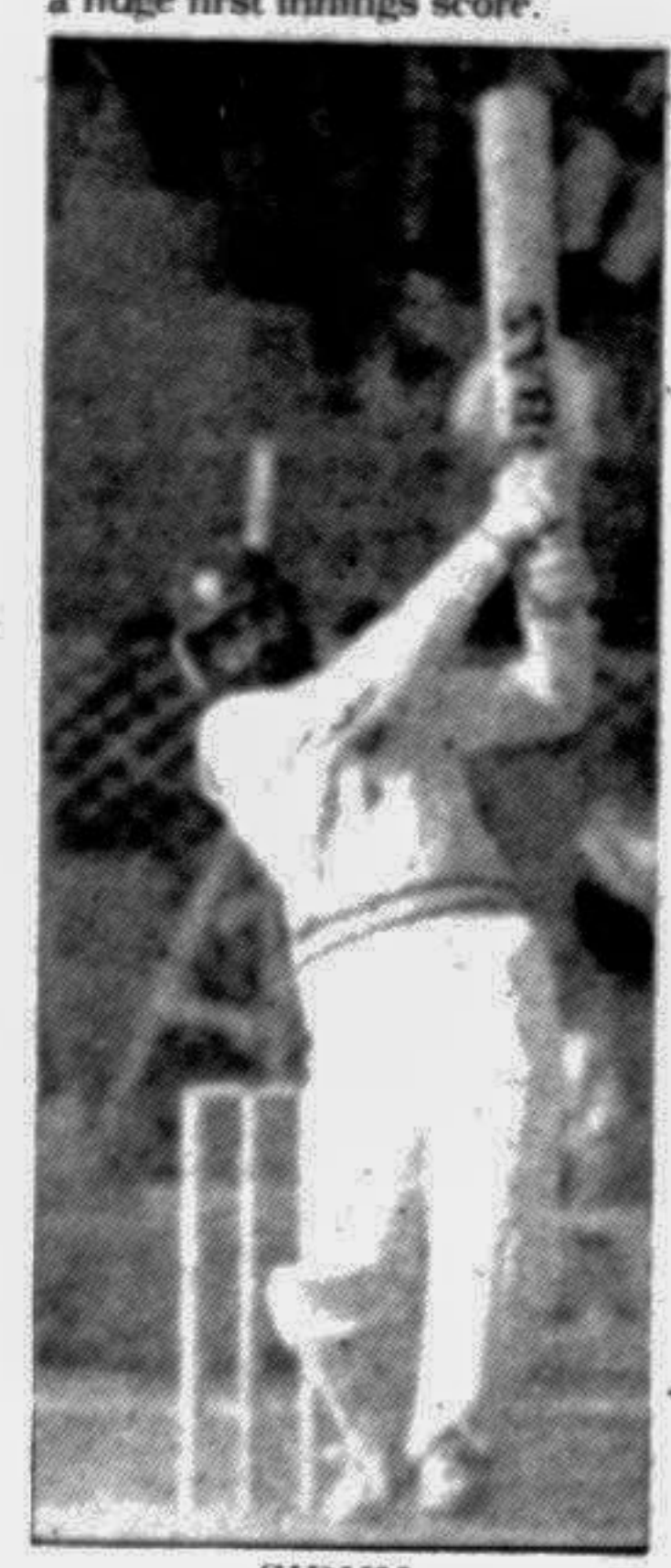
But Sidhu had the satisfaction of compiling his highest Test score in a fifth century in 28 matches — surpassing his previous best of 116 made twice against West Indies and New Zealand.

Sidhu, restricted to just 27 runs in the morning session in India's poor score of 47 for no loss, let loose after lunch with a flurry of strokeplay. Six of his eight sixes were struck against off-spinner Muttiah Muralidharan. Sri Lanka's main bowling hope, who conceded 30 runs in his first three overs and finished with figures of one for 85 from 20 overs.

Muralidharan, however, had the last laugh by having Sidhu caught at long-on an hour after tea when the batsman attempted another big hit. The Sri Lankan fielders clapped Sidhu back to the pavilion, despite having a confident appeal for leg before turned down in the day's second over before the batsman had opened his account.

Aiding Sidhu in the run feast before 15,000 delighted home fans watching the first Test in the city in 42 years was the 19-year-old vice-captain Sachin Tendulkar, who remained unbeaten on 86 at close. Sidhu and Tendulkar gave India's faltering innings a boost

with a rip-roaring stand of 121 for the third wicket in equal time. Tendulkar, whose contribution in the partnership was 48, opened out after Sidhu's dismissal to launch India towards a huge first innings score.



SIDHU

He has so far hit 14 fluent boundaries and looks set for a seventh test century in a short, but brilliant career of 29 matches.

Skipper Mohammad Azharuddin kept Tendulkar company at close with 20, the pair having so far put on 65 for the fourth wicket in 78 minutes. In Muralidharan's first over, Sidhu took 16 runs off the final three deliveries with a six over long-on, a flick to square leg for four and another six to long-off.

The robust Sikh reached his century in spectacular fashion, moving from 90 to 96 with a six off Muralidharan and repeating

the stroke in the bowler's next over to post the magic three-figure mark. The Sidhu-Tendulkar stand squashed Sri Lanka's hopes of keeping the Indians on a tight leash after they had them grouping at 84 for two midway through the afternoon session.

Sri Lanka broke a 63-run opening stand between Sidhu and Manoj Prabhakar 30 minutes after lunch through a dubious leg before decision by umpire RC Sharma, standing in his first Test match.

Sharma, who annoyed the Sri Lankans before lunch by refusing two confident lbw appeals against Sidhu, upheld a similar appeal by seamer Dulip Liyanage off Prabhakar when the ball appeared to be leaving the leg stump.

Prabhakar, who made 21 in a three-hour stay at the crease, exchanged heated words with the bowler before walking off. Sri Lanka earned another lucky break soon after to make it 84 for two when birthday boy Vinod Kambl ran himself out for five attempting a risky single.

The prolific lefthander played Don Anurasiri to square leg and found himself stranded at the non-striker's end after Sidhu refused to respond to his call. He made five.

SCOREBOARD

Table with columns for India's first Test, India (first innings), and bowling statistics. Includes names like M Prabhakar, N S Sidhu, and various bowlers.

Cronje sets high standards



PERTH, Jan 18: South African cricket captain Hansie Cronje is convinced his team can hold on to win the three-Test series against Australia — but the tourists won't play for a draw during the third Test, reports AP.

South Africa already are one up in the series and need only, to draw the third Test in Adelaide, which starts on Jan 28. "We can't lose the series, that's certain, but we won't get to Adelaide and play negatively," Cronje said. "We'll try and play as hard as we can."

Cronje, who will be 24 at the start of the Adelaide Test, will be the youngest captain from the Republic since the late Sir Murray Bisset, who led South Africa against England in Johannesburg in the 1898-99 series. He was 22.

Cronje has taken over as captain from the injured Kepler Wessels and has made an immediate impact. He recalls the final hours of the nerve-wrecking second Test in Sydney — which South Africa won by five runs — with emotion.

"It was the greatest day in South African cricket history," he said. "Everyone back home really appreciated it, especially with the violence (in South Africa). The victory showed there is bright light end of the tunnel when there is a bit of trouble getting through it at the moment."

"The win certainly has kept the smile on the faces of people back home. I enjoyed every moment of it, although it was tough." Cronje gives credit to Wessels for the transition of an

inexperienced South African team into a tight-knit unit. "All credit should go to Kepler for moulding us into what we are today," he said. "He deserves credit as much as anyone else does in that historic win."

Cronje said two World Series limited-overs wins in Perth have further lifted the morale of his squad. The South Africans will not know until Wednesday whether they have qualified for the series finals against Australia.

He believes the upcoming series in South Africa against Australia will provide further proof of his team's improvement. "We'll be very glad to play them in South Africa," he said.

"We have done well against all odds here. Back home we'll have everything to our advantage — conditions, pitches and the crowds.

"Even our fast bowlers have experienced difficulty in Australian conditions, where the ball doesn't swing as much as it does back home. We had to overcome it, which meant the bowlers had to change their rhythm."

"One thing the South Africans need to improve their approach against spin bowling. "We aren't good players of spin," Cronje said. "Shane Warne proved it by taking 12 wickets against us in the Sydney Test, but we are getting better day by day."

"Playing against spinners in Sri Lanka helped us immensely. We are playing the spinners much better than we did before."

For aggressive coach Mike Procter the most pleasing aspect of the Australian tour has been the mental toughness of his players.

Rutherford spells his priorities out



MELBOURNE, Jan 18: New Zealand cricket captain Ken Rutherford sees Wednesday's World Series match with Australia his team's most important of the season, reports AP.

"It's crucial to get into the finals to earn some self respect," Rutherford said Tuesday of the day-night limited-overs match at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

"We lost quite a bit during the Test series and although we have performed a lot better in the one-dayers, the bottom line is getting into the finals. "If we win we can hold our heads high and look very positively towards the finals."

A New Zealand victory will send the team into the best-of-three finals series against first-place Australia. A loss means New Zealand would finish level with South Africa with seven points from eight matches, and run rates will be used to decide which team advances.

Rutherford, aware that Australia does not relish chasing totals, said New Zealand was almost certain to bat first if they won the toss. "I think the toss may be significant. I can see that wicket remaining pretty much the same throughout the course of the game," he said.

"I'm a great believer on any track which looks as though it's going to be a good batting deck to try and get the runs on the board first."

Meanwhile, Australian off-spinner Tim May has been ruled out of the match after twisting his ankle at practice on Tuesday. May rolled his right ankle on a rubber mat while bowling and was taken to hospital for treatment.

Rutherford, speaking during the New South Wales Open, said that Becker's comments had damaged the game and the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) should act over them.

Becker was quoted as saying that the playing demands of the tour had become so tough that some players used drugs to help them get by.

Other leading players including world No 1 Pete Sampras and No 2 Michael Stich have reacted with dismay to his comments, saying they had no knowledge of drug taking. And Lendl went a step further on Tuesday.

"I think the ATP has to reply to it very strongly," Lendl said.

Lendl gives Becker a choice

SYDNEY, Jan 18: Former world No 1 Ivan Lendl here Tuesday demanded that Boris Becker be asked to prove his recent claim that players were using drugs, reports AFP.