KARACHI, Jan 26: The Pakistan cricket team man ager Intikhab Alam Thursday rated as high his squad's chances of winning the sixth cricket World Cup. reports

Things are looking good chances are great and we are ready to defend the title." Intikhab Alam told AFP from Lahore, where the players are production line. attending a training camp.

However, he said, much would depend on who "clicks in at the right time, gets in West Indies revelled in one form and performs well."

The manager said his other team was working hard at physical training and having | Michael Holding, "whispering special fielding sessions.

The team, led by Wasim Akram, will be banking on senior players in the World Cup, which is due to start from February 14.

"We are definitely expecting a great deal from our senior players as there are nine players in the present team Cup final," Intikhab said.

He said he had no worry about fitness of veteran Javed Miandad, who has been recalled for the World Cup after almost two years of absence due to knee problem, and of . Wagar Younis, a deadly fast bowler, who faced back problems and could not get many wickets in the Test series in most discovered by accident. Australia last vear.

"They are in a good shape and I have no worry." Intikhab said his team has the best bowling attack in the

world. "We have great fast bowlers Wasim Akram and Wagar Younis and then experienced Aagib Javed and young Ataur Rehman. There are also spinners Mushtag Ahmed and Saglain Mushtag.

Mushtag Ahmad had a successful tour of Australia and New Zealand where he got 28 wickets, in Test matches.

"Mushtaq has come a long way. He used his leg breaks and googlies with great intelligence in Australia and New Zealand. I think he will play a leading role," Intikhab said. Intikhab said his team has

a balanced batting side with two aggressive openers Saeed Anwar and Aamir So-

Then there are Inzamamul Haq — "a world class batsman with great talent" -and Miandad with playing experience in all previous World Cups, as well as Ramiz Raja, Salim Malik and Ijaz Ahmad.

In the late order there are wicketkeeper-batsman Rashid Latif and Wasim Akram who "has the capacity to switch matches with his aggressive batting," Intikhab

Acme Div II cricket

Sports Reporter

Dhaka Mariners Young Club and Rainbow Athletics Club won their respective Acme Second Division cricket league matches on

Friday. Mariners handed Shantinagar 'A' a six-wicket defeat at the Mirpur Outer Stadium while Rainbow recorded a 96-run victory over Rupali Bank at the Dhanmondi Club ground.

BRIEF SCORE

SHANTINAGAR 'A': 129 in 28.3 overs (Noor 27, Raju 26 n.o., Matin 5/28) MARINERS YOUNG: 133 for four in 24.2 overs (Liton 50 n.o., Rana 37 Result: Mariners won

by six wickets.

RAINBOW AC: 262 for seven in 40 overs (Lipon 73, Nasir 48, Rana 47 Shishir 3/42) RUPALI BANK: 166 in

34 overs (Mustafiz 34 Jewel 31 n.o., Lipon 3/31) Result: Rainbow won by **96** runs.

Rain plays havoc at Napier

NAPIER, Jan 26: Steady rain on Friday morning forced the abandonment of a limited-overs cricket match between Zimbabwe and Central Districts, reports AP.

The rain is linked to a sub-tropical cyclone off the east coast of the North Island of New Zealand

"A few of the guys are disappointed because they were looking forward to getting a game, but a few others won't mind putting their feet up for a day," said Zimbabwe team manager Denis Streak.

Zimbabwe were to use the game to prepare for three Jimited-overs internationals against New Zealand, starting at Auckland on Sunday.

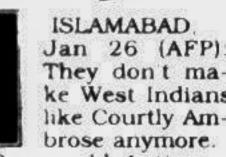
Progati Div III

soccer

Both the Progati Insurance Third Division football league matches - Kawranbazar Progoti Sangha vs Chalantika Krira Chakra and Purbachal Parishad vs BG Press were tied goalless at the Rajuk Ground yesterday.

With the draws, Kawranbazar and BG Press earned five points each from four matches while Purbachal and Chalantika have three and one point respectively to the account from as many out-

Call for Curtly to wake up



They don't make West Indians like Courtly Ambrose anymore. The 32-year-old Antiguan is the last in a long line of great strike bowlers that

While the rest of the world scratched about in search of pace bowlers the household name after an-

used to roll off the Caribbean

Poker-faced Andy Robets. death." Joel Garner, the man they called big bird, and the compact, whippy Malcolm

Then there was the 6ft 7ins of Ambrose and Courtney Walsh of Jamaica ... and then the line, quite suddenly ground to a shuddering halt.

For both, the 1996 World who played in the last World | Cup is likely to prove a swansong. Ambrose's enthusiasm for the daily grind is already under scrutiny, especially after he was fined for indiscipline during the tour of England last year.

Bowling, it is clear, is not coming quite as easily as it once did. It was an art Ambrose al-

His first love had been basketball before he made the switch at 17.

AIN, Trinidad.

Jan 26: West

Indies, the best

team in world

cricket for mo-

re than a decade, have to find

unity and renewed consis-

tency to mount an effective

World Cup campaign on the

sub-continent, reports

brought Brian Lara and cap-

tain Richie Richardson into

confrontation has been an

unsettling element in a side

whose formidable powers

have been on the wane in re-

Test series between 1980

and 1995 but they have gen-

West Indies never lost a

Internal strife which

Reuter.

cent years.

Soon, however, his unerring accuracy and the sharp bounce produced by his massive height was causing mayhem at the top level as part of a four-man pace attack.

Stout-hearted Englishmen still wake up in cold sweats at the thought of him. In 1991 he took eight of their scalps for 45 runs, five of his wickets coming in a five-over

In Trinidad during the 1993/94 series the tourists



C AMBROSE only to reach a shellshocked 40-8 by the end of the fourth

Australians have also come in for the Ambrose treatment. His most famous spell came three years ago in Perth, when he took seven wickets in 32 balls, conceding one miserly single on the

English county Northamtonshire had seen enough well before then and, under the wise old adage that you should join what you cannot beat, had signed him up in

It did not take long for Ambrose to impress, taking a wicket with his first ball for the side.

But that was then. Recently, injuries have begun to dog him, although they could not stop him taking 21 wickets against England last summer at an average of 24.09. Every now and again, the

old passions reawakens, as it did during the second Test in June, when he bagged three wickets for two runs. But when England skip-

per Michael Atherton says "Curtly is definitely the best bowler I've faced," you feel he is talking about another, halfforgotten time.

Batsmen, however, have been slow to suggest to Ambrose's face that he is no longer the man he was. Which suggests he might be able to build up one last head of steam next month.

the board for misconduct

after his return to the

Caribbean. He promptly

pulled out of the squad on

the eve of their departure for

freshed by a subsequent

break from the game, has

been included in West Indies'

final Cup squad of 14, setting

Richardson the task of bring-

ing fresh harmony to a side

driven by dissension seven

his sublime batsmanship that

West Indies need Lara at ease

within the squad and his sur-

roundings to heighten their

chances. The holder of the

highest score in Test and

first-class cricket has it

within his power to play a

glittering role in the ultimate

Indies' main worry, a fact

that Richardson acknowl-

edged after the World Series

competition in which their

problems were compounded

by the captain's own moder-

mances of all-rounder Ottis

Gibson towards the end of

the Australian tour offered a

measure of encouragement

ahead of the World Cup.

Fragile batting is West

The effective perfor-

limited overs event.

ate form.

Such is the influence of

Lara, apparently re-

a tour of Australia.

months ago.

Becker, Chang in good nick

By Tawfiq Aziz Khan Boris Becker had a nice practice session against Mark

Woodforde before his final against Michael Chang Sun-It was an extraordinary

semifinal of the Australian Open in which the number four seed tamed the number 51 men's singles rank holder of Australia in an hour and 37 minutes. Except that both players have residence in Monte Carlo there was hardly any similarity between the two. Becker, though subdued, was his usual self firing out aces and scorching crosscourt passes. Woodforde on the contrary played his usual soft tennis with delicate sliced backhand topspins and volleys from the net. But these were hardly any reply for Becker's powerful ground strokes and his 200 kmh

Earlier in the day Michael Chang thwarted Andre Agassi's bid to stage a comeback in the third set as he so successfully performed in his earlier matches. Michael Chang, who was in fine tune. swept Agassi, the reigning champion and seed number two in another straight set match. This will be Chang's first Australian Open final and that too against Boris Becker - one of the best in the business today.

Asprilla off to England

PARMA, Italy, Jan 26: Colombian striker Faustino Asprilla left Italy for Newcastle on Thursday to sign for the English Premiership pace setters in a seven million pound deal, reports AFP.

The fee was revealed by officials of the Italian club who claimed that Asprilla would also receive a weekly 15,500 pounds salary.

Spokesman Giorgio Gandolfi confirmed on Thursday that Asprilla had left for Newcastle, and the 26-yearold player said he was leaving Parma and its fans "with re-

"I had some wonderful years in this city and with this team," he said, although he made no secret that his relationship with Parma coach Nevio Scala had become strained by his failure to win a regular first team place.

The Colombian player joined Parma in 1992 from Nacional Medellin.

3rd Asian Winter Games in China

The third Asian Winter Games will be held in Harbin. China. Athletes from more than 15 Asian nations will compete in the Games, one of the largest events in the history of Asian sports, to be held from February 4-11 in Heilongjang province, says a press release.

With the Nagano Winter Olympics in Japan just two years away, the Asian Winter Games will provide competitors with a highly competitive environment to test and further develop their skills among Asia's growing league of top athletes.

Coca-Cola, one of the biggest supporters of sports in Asia, will be the official soft drink sponsors of the Games. Coca-Cola is affiliated with more than 60 major sports events, associations and programmes throughout the world and is among the top four official sponsors of the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta, the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, and the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney.



Melbourne yesterday.

Becker's date with Chang

MELBOURNE. Jan 26: A ruthless Michael Chang has only Boris Becker to beat now to end his seven-year Grand Slam

drought after annihilating defending champion Andre Agassi in straight sets in the Australian Open semifinals today, reports Reuter. But Becker, who won the

Open in 1991, will be no pushover after blitzing unseeded Australian veteran Mark Woodforde 6-4, 6-2, 6-0 in only one hour 38 min-

aces in a whitewash third set. The 28-year-old German. who has not won a Grand Slam since his 1991 victory at Flinders Park, was asked afterwards how hungry he was for a sixth Grand Slam

title. "Since I haven't been eating for the last couple of years, it's quite hungry. I was quite close (last year) at Wimbledon and I couldn't manage it, but I'm in the final again and I'm going to take another shot at it." he told reporters.

But the world number



The gritty American Michael Chang shows little emotion after spoiling compatriot Andre Agassi's dream of consecutive Aussie Open crowns in Melbo-urne yesterday. Chang outclassed a stunned Agassi in the semifinal 6-1, 6-4, 7-6 (7/1). -AFP/UNB photo

utes to set up a final showdown against the 23-year-old world number five. Fourth seed Becker was

brutal in his defeat of Woodforde, who had surprised everyone including himself, in winning his way to a first Grand Slam semifinal at the 38th attempt.

Becker ignored sentiment and a partisan crowd to blast Woodforde off the court, appropriately wrapping up the Centre Court match with two

a run of poor form at the Open since winning the title. now comes up against an inform player who not has dropped a set in six matches on the way to a third Grand Slam final on Sunday. Chang, who said before

four, who has put behind him

the tournament the gap between him and the top players was closing, was true to his word in literally blowing away number one Agassi 6-1.

can mastered the almost gale-force conditions better than his compatriot and almost sat back and watched as Agassi unleashed a string of Chang not only used his

The super-mobile Ameri-

uncharacteristic errors. new. longer racquet to devastating effect with 13 aces but was all over the court, running down potential winners. varying the pace of the game with clever top spin and waiting for the Agassi mistakes

Agassi obliged and conceded afterwards that the wind was a nightmare.

"It was one of the windiest days I've ever played in a Grand Slam tournament," he said. "The wind was kind of playing havoc out there. In a windy situation, a player with a lot of footwork (like Chang) has the advantage."

Agassi, who had stumbled down a spiral staircase before his first-round match and inlured his knee, said he felt flat, a feeling reflected in an astonishing 60 unforced er-

"I don't think anything has been 100 per cent the whole tournament," said Agassi who played three gruelling five-setters on his way to the semifinal.

Down two sets. Agassi showed only glimpses of the form that save him from defeat in the nail-biting quarter-finals against Jim Courier. a win that gave him the points to wrest back the number one spot from Pete Sampras.

The Las Vegas battled back from an eight-game losing streak in the second set to salvage some pride and then broke Chang's booming serve in the third to set up a 4-1 lead.

But Agassi's errors kept mounting and his game cracked beneath the weight of them midway through the final set, when he hit a forehand long to give Chang the break back and send the match into a tie break which Chang blitzed 7-1 The 1.73-metre Chang.

who is striving for a second Grand Slam title after winning the French Open as a raw 17-year-old, said no one could rest on their top rankthink it shows the depth of men's tennis now. If

you are number one in the world it does not mean you are safe anymore," said Chang, who now has a 5-9 loss record against Agassi. Despite the crushing na-

ture of his defeat. Agassi still backed Becker for his second title here. "I think Boris has a game

that can take Chang's speed out of the equation to a certain degree and a guy like Boris serves well. When he's holding he's good enough to beat anybody."

Coetzer in a tight three-set

24 Grand Slam attempts is

against a player who has

beaten her twice since her

comeback - 6-3, 6-2, last

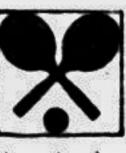
August in the Canadian Open

and 6-1, 6-4 the following

But Huber's first final in

semifinal.

Seles eyeing 4th crown



MELBOURNE. Jan 26: Even an injured Monica Seles has been

far too strong for the opposition in her first Australian Open since her comeback and only Germany's Anke Huber now stand in the way of a ninth Grand Slam title. reports Reuter.

Top-seeded Seles, playing only her fourth tournament since her return to tennis last August, has progressed through the year's first Grand Slam event with a nagging groin strain and is now nursing a sore shoulder ahead of Saturday's final. But the 22-year-old Yu-

goslav-born American, hot favourite to win her fourth Open title in the absence of Steffi Graf, has only dropped one set in her six matches, a tie-break in a dramatic semifinal against teenager Chanda The joint world number

one with Graf said after the one-hour 57-minute defeat of Rubin that her left playing arm was so sore on Wednesday she was unable to lift it in practice and had to quit. "I was worried a lot about that," said Seles who had the break in Thursday's clash with Rubin.



her first Grand Slam.

chologically settle for the satshe said.

last year after stretching Graf to five sets in the final of the season-ending WTA Tour Championships in New York. Nevertheless a fourth Australian Open title for Se-

les - she has never been beaten in Australia - will crown a stunning comeback to the game after her oncourt stabbing in April 1993 at a Hamburg tournament by a crazed Graf fan. Since her 28-month layeff

to recover from the trauma of the attack, the injury prone Seles has won the Canadian Open and this month's Peters International in Sydney and lost an emotionally-charged US Open final to Graf.

the women's game and revived interest here after a year in which Mary Pierce emerged the victor in the absence of Graf and Seles.

Seles, always generous in her assessment of her opponents, predicted the final against Huber would be very

Linford warms up Down Under

ADELAIDE, Jan 26: Olympic 100 metres champion Linford Christie of Britain cruised to an easy victory Friday night at the Adelaide Grand Prix track and field meet, reports AP.

seconds and dominated the race after the first 40 metres.

Sports Reporter

to the West Indies Cricket erally under-achieved at oneday level since the last World Cup in Australia and New Zealand in 1992 when they failed to reach the semifinals. Clive Lloyd's all-conquerhave agendas."

ing team, who lifted the Cup in imperious style in 1975 and 1979 before losing the 1983 final, set a standard which West Indies have subsequently not matched in the tournament.

Their inconsistency in limited overs cricket was un-

derlined at the recent World

Series triangular tournament

BRIDGETOWN,

Barbados, Jan

26: Carl Hooper

has withdrawn

from the West

World

Indies

Cup squad, citing "personal

and health reasons," the West

Indies Cricket Board of

Control (WICBC) said. reports

CARL HOOPER

WICBC he did not want to be

considered for selection for

the home Test series against

New Zealand starting in

March, the Caribbean News

Agency (CANA) quoted the

WICBC as saying late on

bowler Cameron Cuffy to re-

place him in the 14-man

squad announced on Tuesday

Stephen Camacho said the

board was aware of Hooper's

reasons, but would not make

player, we naturally urged

him to reconsider his deci-

sion but in the circumstances

we have had no option but to

Ghana beat

Mozambique

Ghana maintained their 100

per cent record in the

African Nations Cup when

they beat Mozambique 2-0 on

Thursday to qualify for a

quarterfinal against Zaire in

Port Elizabeth on Sunday, re-

tournament for a record fifth

time, won with goals from

Kwane Ayew of Uniao Leiria

of Portugal after 42 minutes

and Felix Abcagye after 68

Ghana, bidding to win the

BLOEMFONTEIN, Jan 26:

accept it," Camacho added.

"Given Carl's value as a

WICBC chief executive

The WICBC named fast

Thursday.

for the World Cup.

them public.

ports Reuter.

Hooper also told the

in Australia where the host team and Sri Lanka qualified ahead of West Indies for the best-of-three finals.

Time for reconciliation

Richardson must now restore confidence, spirit and purpose to his side against the background of the Lara controversy and criticism from some parts of the Caribbean over his tactical acumen and ability to moti-

vate his players. The uneasy relationship between Lara and his captain came to a head during the Old Trafford Test against England last year when the world record-breaking batsman accused Richardson of not infusing discipline into the team.

Board of Control (WICBC) which was leaked to a Trinidad newspaper, said he was not "prepared to bow to any egoistical people who Lara walked out on the team, saying he had "retired".

but subsequently rejoined the

touring side after the inter-

vention of WICBC president

Richardson, in his report

Peter Short. The Trinidadian left-hander was under the impression that was the end of the matter, only to be fined by

A WICBC statement said:

"Hooper expressed regret at

the lateness of his decision

and the great inconvenience

caused, but given his mental

and physical state over the

last year, this has to be taken,

in both his best interest and

has been put behind him, he

will be given the chance to

continue to serve West Indies

batsman - who has also pulled

out of Guyana's team for

their opening Red Stripe Cup

game in the Caribbean start-

ing on Friday - significantly

affects West Indies' World

possible opening batsman

with Sherwin Campbell after

the selectors omitted out-of-

Tunisia in

Nations' Cup

quarterfinals

26: Two goals from striker

Imed Ben Younes helped

Tunisia overpower Ivory

Coast 3-1 in a heated match

at the Boat Erasums Stadium

on Thursday night to secure

the final place in the African

Nations' Cup quarter-finals.

pip Ivory Coast in Group D.

will now play Gabon in Dur-

ban for a place in the last

rians who dominated the first

25 minutes with captain and

striker Joel Tiehi prominent

tributed to the Tunisian frus-

tration and three of their

players were booked inside

their fortunes with a 32nd-

minute strike past keeper

Obou Macaire Gragbo who

had pulled off a spectacular

double save just seconds be-

fore from Abdel Selimi and

Bekaye was forced to

threaten mass bookings in

order to break up the pro-

longed and elaborate swal-

low-diving Tunisian celebra-

second seven minutes later

with a sweetly struck leftfoot

free-kick from the edge of

the penalty area that curled

over the seven-man Ivorian

wall and into the top right

hand corner of the net

Ben Younes added his

Malian referee Sidi

the first 21 minutes.

A greasy surface con-

But Ben Younes changed

Ironically it was the ivo-

Tunisia, who had to win to

reports Reuter.

in attack.

Zoubeir Beya.

tions.

PORT ELIZABETH, Jan

He was earmarked as a

The absence of the Kent

cricket.

Cup plans.

"He trusts that once this

that of West Indies cricket.

Hooper pulls out of World Cup

Hooper has appeared in 144 one-day internationals for the West Indies, scoring 3,303 runs at an average of 33.03, with a highest score of 113 not out against India in 1988. He has scored two

overs game. that a fit and mentally at-

form specialist openers Phill Simmons and Stuart Williams.

centuries and 19 fifties and taken 132 wickets as an offspin bowler in the limited-We have certainly lost a most important player in our quest to do well in the World Cup. It goes without saying tuned Carl Hooper is a tremendous asset to West Indies cricket." Camacho

German bomber Boris Becker acknowledges the fans after sweeping aside local favourite Mark Woodforde 6-4, 6-2, 6-0 in the semifinals of the Aussie Open in - AFP/UNB photo

injury treated during a rain emerged from the shadow of Graf, casting off the "otner German' label in her defeat of South Africa's Amanda

While Seles will probably spend much of Friday on the treatment table - she has brought along her own physiotherapist for the tournament fortnight — Huber will doubtless spend her time



MONICA SELES

thinking out a strategy to win The 21-year-old ninthranked Huber has finally

Sebwe offering hope for

Liberia as world footballer-

come Liberia's way brought

an outstanding save from

Pangi Merikani from James

Debbah's powerful shot in

The introduction of

Emeka Esanga Mamale in the

second half increased Zaire's

dominance as he made a

series of incisive runs down

equaliser and ease the pres-

sure Liberia pushed forward

only to concede the killer

second goal inside the last 20

trap with Liberia's defence

standing on the half way line.

He drew keeper Anthony

Tokpah and presented the

ball to Essende who simply

lost another couple of goals

as they pushed forward des-

perately searching for a life-

Zaire were worthy winners.

line. But there was to be no

Liberia could easily have

tapped it into an empty net.

Kasongo beat the offside

In an effort to grab the

The only real chance to

largely anonymous.

the seventh minute.

the left wing.

minutes.

Zaire stun Liberia JOHANNESBUR intelligent running of Kelvin

G, Jan 26: A stunning 2-0 victory for Zaire of-the-year Weah remained put George Weah's Liberia out of the African Nations' Cup on

Thursday, reports Reuter. Needing to win by two clear goals, the 1974 African champions did exactly that to overcome a disjointed display from the Liberians.

A fifth-minute penalty by

Menama Lukaku and a 72nd-

minute breakaway goal by Yves Essende sent Zaire through to the quarterfinals as Group C runners-up behind Gabon. All three teams finished on three points, but Liberia

had the worst goal difference. Zaire will meet the Group D winners, almost certainly Ghana, in the quarterfinals, while Gabon face the Group D

runners-up. The writing was on the wall early for Liberia as Alexander Freeman was penalised for bringing down Banza Kasongo with a sliding tackle from behind. Lukaku made no mistake with the spot kick.

Zaire went on to dominate the first half, with only the

month at the US Open. Huber believes she gained something from the two defeats. "I didn't play that bad. I had some chances and it could have been better for me (on both occasions). learned something and hope I can do it better on Saturday," she said. The eight seed is also worried that she might psy-

isfaction of simply reaching the final. "There's a danger because it is the first time hope I can still concentrate Huber is probably playing the best tennis of her career She broke into the top 10

Her return has revitalised lackluster tournament last

Christie clocked 10.00

magic from AC Milan's Weah or any of his colleagues and