

Nagpur Test

rained off

NAGPUR, India, Nov 30: Heavy rain washed out play for the second successive day to consign the second cricket test between India and Sri Lanka to a tame draw here today, reports AFP.

Umpires Cyril Mitchell and VK Ramaswamy wasted no time in calling off play on the fifth and final day as steady rain since Saturday swamped the outfield at the Vidarbha Cricket Association Stadium.

The teams did not even make an appearance at the ground, preferring to pack their bags for the onward journey to Bombay where the third and final Test starts on Wednesday.

Three hours of play was lost on the first day and another four on the third. Only one innings was completed, with India making 485 by lunch on the third day.

The first Test of the short series was drawn last week.

Venables on the move?

MELBOURNE, Nov 30 (AP): Terry Venables appears certain to move on to a high profile European club team after failing to lead Australia into the World Cup in a heartbreaking qualifying loss to Iran.

Iran grabbed a 2-2 tie in front of 85,000 fans at the MCG on Saturday to take the last of 32 places in the World Cup draw on the away goals rule with a 3-3 aggregate.

Venables, whose previous sudden-death game ended in similar pain when England lost the semifinal of the European Championships, was paid a reported US \$500,000 dollars for an 18 months contract.

It was money Soccer Australia could barely afford, but it backed up by ploughing extra funds to suit Venables' every whim.

Soccer Australia chairman David Hill said Venables would be offered an extended contract but there appears to be little left for him here.

Venables, who has been linked in the media with Liverpool, Everton and Benfica, was coy about his future in the gloom of Saturday's exit.

"I don't know. It's not the right time at the moment. I don't feel too bright myself," was his only direct comment on the matter.

Hill said, "He's done absolute wonders for us."

"We not only want Terry to stay on but we want to talk to him about extending his stay beyond the middle of next year, when his current contract expires."

"His record is remarkable. He's a wonderful bloke and a wonderful coach and we want more of him not less."

Venables was in charge for 14 matches, winning 12 and getting ties in the other two — both against Iran.

He was criticised for continuing to attack on Saturday when the hosts led 2-0 early in the second half.

Karim Bagheri pulled one back after 75 minutes and five minutes later the panicked Soccer allowed Khodadad Azizi to run through and beat Aston Villa goalkeeper Mark Bosnich in a one-on-one.

"The players on there were playing well," Venables said. "I was thinking about a change, in fact we were just getting ready for it. But when they scored the goal we panicked about it, worried about it and just dropped off."

Australian captain Alex Tobin was so crushed he could not speak.

Tobin, the only Australian-based player in the starting lineup, scored an own goal four years ago as Australia bowed out to Argentina in the final qualifying game.

Striker Graham Arnold, 34, a veteran of four campaigns, had already announced he would quit international soccer if Australia lost.

Southampton's Robbie Slater, 33, is another whose World Cup days look to be behind him after three attempts.

West Ham United's Stan Lazaridis was Australia's best, causing havoc down the left flank in the first half.

An apology to Miandad



Miandad is now a past story. He is gone never to come and entertain on the field.

Yes he is past but who can forget what he did for Pakistan. He and Imran were the only two players in Pakistan who were not only very good players but also very tough at their minds. They never accepted defeat.

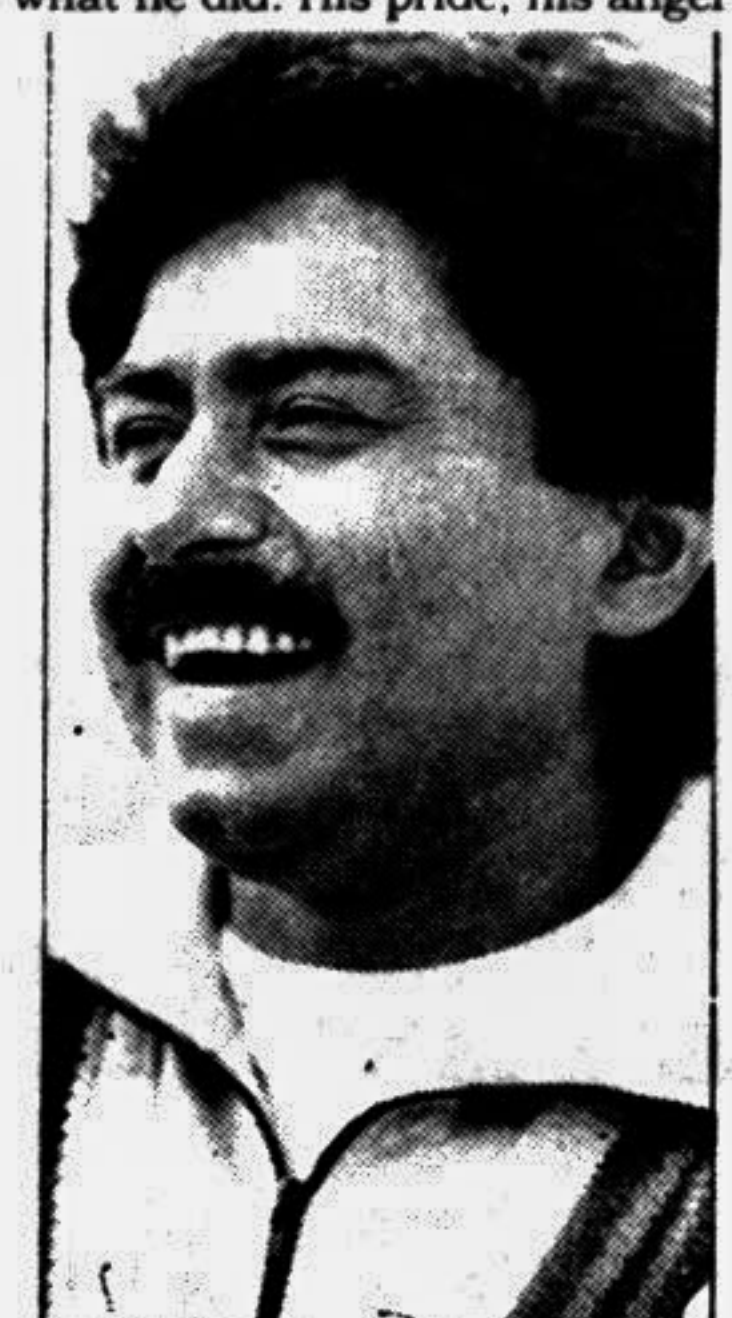
Players come and players go, but who can claim that in the toughest situation he or was better than Miandad. Miandad is not the name of a player, but it is the name of an academy. If you want to learn cricket you go and see the performance of Miandad. The tougher the match, the tougher was Miandad. Who can forget the six on the last ball in Sharjah. He did it so calmly that even the opponent was unable to understand till the last time. A nick here a nick there and kept the score board moving though other batsmen kept falling at the other end. Miandad's greatest magic was that he not only used to play well himself but he lifted the morale of other batsmen. In the 1992 World Cup semifinal everyone saw Inzamam hitting mercilessly but who was coming to pat Inzamam. Who patted and told him to go in the final overs. Every one used to see him talking to the other batsmen. His signals to the batsmen to make him play according to the situation.

Who could forget the words of Great Viv that "I can give all my career for Miandad's innings." He didn't say those words for Inzamam, Tendulkar or Lara. The reason there are many many good players but they play for themselves. Miandad used to take the load of the

Jamal Nasir Khan

whole team upon his shoulders. Yes I remember the interview of Aamir Sohail in which he said that it is better that Miandad was retired, now he can't interfere in the matters of cricket. I recommend to authorities not to waste this cricket genius mind. Miandad should be selected as the coach of the team.

In Bangalore Sohail was the captain, he had to carry the weight of the whole team on his shoulder. But every one saw what he did. His pride, his anger



JAVED MIANDAD

and his inefficient captaincy made Pakistan to lick their wounds. After 11 overs the run rate had dropped to 5.11 and that was a very attainable target with only one wicket down. Then came the comments of

Imran. "Now there is no need to hit every ball as the target is quite attainable" rather I would suggest that we pretty much single here and there and would have done it. The next ball Sohail hit another four to Prasad and then pointed him to bring the ball. Imran said, "What could I say." In the next ball his innings was over. Fall of a proud batsman.

Instead of sending Miandad to take control of the game, because he was the only batsman in the team, although half fit, but very capable to take singles, keep wickets intact, and keep the scoreboard moving. But Sohail, then captain of Pakistan, send other hard hitters. It seemed he wanted to make those 289 in 30 overs. Boycott's words were, "If you play Miandad you better utilise him also."

How could Sohail have expected Miandad to hit in the last overs. He should have kept the other hard hitters at the end so that when Miandad makes sure that no other wickets fell. Even if the average would have reached above 6 even then on that flat surface there no way our guys would not have achieved victory. My point is that Sohail should try to keep cool. He can't be as good as Miandad. Not even half. But the other thing mental toughness, it will be a reason of downfall for Sohail. Do anything but think before you speak. You are not as dear to Pakistanis as was and is Miandad. I am sorry Miandad for what happened to you.

(We think the article appreciating Javed Miandad, the 'Barely Miah' of Pakistan, is quite interesting and hope that our readers will enjoy the piece.)

Courtesy: CI Interactive Magazine

Rimet would've been proud



MARSEILLE, France, Nov 30: (AP) It's just how Jules Rimet wanted it.

A record 32 nations, including first-time qualifiers such as South Africa, Japan and Jamaica, make the Dec. 4 draw exactly what the "Father of the World Cup" dreamed of.

While the first event in 1930 had only 13 nations from Europe and the Americas, this one, starting with 169 qualifiers, is a true World Cup.

Rimet's vision was of a competition that included as many nations as possible. But the Frenchman, who was honoured for his contribution by having the trophy named after him, died in 1956 before it became a reality.

Now come the complexities of the draw.

Before drawing the 32 teams into eight groups of four for the first stage of the finals, FIFA and the organising committee will first split them into four categories of eight based on how good they are.

That is calculated mainly on their results in previous World Cups and their FIFA rankings and it guarantees each group gets a powerhouse and a minnow.

They could have made several more categories.

The main contenders — Brazil, Germany, Italy, Argentina, France and England likely will be among the top eight.

The leading outsiders — Nigeria, Colombia, Yugoslavia, Spain, Bulgaria and Romania.

Possible quarterfinalists — Norway, Paraguay, Denmark and first time qualifier Croatia.

Regular under-achievers — The talented Dutch aim to improve on two runner-up finishes. Belgium has made it 10 times and for the fifth in a row, yet hasn't made a final. Eleven-time qualifier Mexico can only boast two quarterfinal appearances. Scotland, in eight tries, hasn't been past the first round.

Probable second-round departures — The United States, making a third appearance in a row, Saudi Arabia, surprise second-round achiever last time, aren't likely to get further.

First-round fallers — Austria, Chile, Tunisia, Iran and Morocco should be among the first to go home.

Under the heading quirky nicknames come the "Indomitable Lions" of Cameroon, Bafana, Bafana from South Africa and the "Reggae Boyz" from Jamaica.

And, thankfully for FIFA, both the co-hosts of the 2002 finals have made it — South Korea for the fifth time and Japan for the first. But neither is likely to get into the last 16.

With 15 European nations in the draw, it's certain that all but one group will get two. But the

winning women's team.

Michel Platini, a standout French player of the 1980s and co-chairman of the organizing committee for World Cup '98, will also take part.

FIFA bristled at suggestions that the game's most famous player, Pele, had been snubbed for the second World Cup draw in a row. In Las Vegas in 1994, Pele was shut out because he was involved in a legal battle with Ricardo Teixeira, head of the Brazilian soccer federation and son-in-law of FIFA president Joao Havelange.

That legal action is still rumbling on but FIFA said that Pele, who is Brazil's minister for sports, wasn't invited to take part this time because he was at the draw in other capacities.

The 1998 World Cup happens to coincide with the 40th anniversary of Pele's explosion onto the scene as a 17-year-old. He scored three goals in Brazil's 5-2 victory over Sweden in the 1958 final and went on to help Brazil win the title in 1962 and 1970.

Whatever happens at the draw, Brazil probably won't need Pele's help this time.

Mario Zagallo's team has such an embarrassment of riches that the coach's biggest problem will be deciding which of his stars to leave out.

Italy, losing finalist to Brazil in 1994, failed to win its qualifying group this time and only made it to the finals through a playoff.

England, which failed to qualify last time, now looks stronger game by game under coach Glenn Hoddle. Argentina has become used to playing well even without Diego Maradona, who dominated its last four World Cup campaigns but was kicked out of the last competition for a positive drug test.

Germany enters the draw as European champion but has few new names to add to its aging stars, while host nation France has plenty of talent but needs a spark of inspiration to make it a title-winning team for the first time.

Although Cameroon has qualified for the third time in a row, Nigeria and South Africa appear to be the strongest contenders from Africa.

JULES RIMET

five South American teams will be separated, so will the five Africans, the four Asians and the three CONCACAF nations.

A group could look something like this — Brazil, Yugoslavia, Scotland, Japan, Or maybe Germany, Nigeria, United States, Austria.

The draw takes place in the Stade Velodrome, home of Olympique Marseille, after a soccer game — Europe vs. Rest of the World — with players from all 32 competing nations taking part.

Joining FIFA secretary general Sepp Blatter on stage to draw the balls from the bowls will be Franz Beckenbauer, who guided Germany to World Cup triumphs both as a player and a coach, Carlos Alberto Parreira, who coached Brazil to its record fourth success in 1994, FIFA's 1996 player of the year George Weah, and Julie Foudy, member of the US Olympic gold medal-

winning women's team.

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SA-WA match drawn

PERTH, Nov 30: South Africa received solid match practice for their internationals against Australia with an draw against Western Australia in their cricket tour match which ended Sunday, reports AP.

The tourists set WA an unrealistic target of 289 to win off 52 overs after declaring at 167 for three just after lunch.

South Africa plays a Prime Minister's XI in Canberra on Tuesday before tackling Australia in a one-day international at the SCG on Thursday.

SCORES: South Africa 468 and 167-3 drew with Western Australia 347-8 and 147-2.

PM felicitates Davis Cup champs

STOCKHOLM, Nov 30: Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson, on Saturday, congratulated the Swedish Davis Cup team on their 'impressive and convincing' victory over the United States in the final, reports AP.

"I want to offer my warm congratulations to all of you on the Swedish team for the impressive victory over the United States in the Davis Cup final. With fast play, individual ball control, and an excellent and devoted team spirit, you recorded a very convincing victory," Persson wrote in a fax.

"Once again, Swedish tennis has shown it is world class and has got sweet revenge after last year's narrow defeat" against France, he wrote.

Jonas Bjorkman and Nicklas Pietrangeli gave the home side an unbeatable 3-0 lead on Saturday by beating Todd Martin and Jonathan Stark 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 in the doubles.

Bjorkman had beaten Michael Chang 7-5, 1-6, 6-3, 6-3 in the opening singles, Magnus Larsson then recorded a 3-6, 7-6 (7-1), 2-1 victory over Pete Sampras, who was forced to default after a leg injury.

Sweden has now won the Davis Cup six times.

Mustafa lifts Ispahani Cup golf title

The 10th Ispahani Cup golf tournament held recently at the Kurmitola Golf Club course, says a press release.

About 240 golfers including foreigners participated in the meet.

Lt General Mahbubur Rahman, Chief of Army Staff and president, Kurmitola Golf Club inaugurated the tournament and gave away prizes among the winners.

Following are the winners: Winner — Maj General Mustafa Kamaluddin; Runner-up — Big Masud Ali Khan; ladies' winner — Jeong Ok Jeon; senior winner — Y Kosaka; senior winner — Maj General S Ameer Ali; junior winner — Faisal Khan; front nine — Sajjad S Ahmed; closest to pin — General Abdul Hafiz Malik; longest drive — Saad Rahim; most birdies — Gurmeet Singh.

The four-pronged West Indian pace attack spearheaded by Curtly Ambrose and skipper Courtney Walsh were thrashed for 50 runs off 67 balls after Pakistan started their first innings midway into the lunch session. Sohail lifted Bishop for a huge six over mid-wicket in his first over.

Resuming at the overnight total of 179 for four, both the overnight Caribbean half century-makers Sherwin Campbell and Chanderpaul started off confidently. Campbell, 66 overnight, played a glorious cover drive for four off the day's very first delivery from medium fast Azhar Mahmood.

However, Campbell did not last long as he pulled Mahmood straight to Shoaib Akhtar at deep line leg after making a patient 78 off five and a half hour stay at the wicket.

Campbell's departure brought an end to a terrific 147-run fifth wicket partnership which helped West Indies to recover from 58 for four on the first day.

Shoaib Akhtar, the right-arm medium fast bowler, claimed his first Test wicket when he knocked back Ian Bishop's (10) leg stump just before lunch as West Indies added 92 runs in two hours for the loss of three wickets.

Diminutive Williams also played a little but productive 48-run innings in the end which propelled West Indies total beyond 300. However,

old left-hander, hit 13 boundaries during his 267 minutes in the centre and faced 154 balls. He remained in the nervous nineties for 35 minutes before paceman Waqar Younis had him leg before in his fifth over with the second new ball.

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WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS ... the 1997 Swedish Davis Cuppers sing after defeating the United States 3-0 in Gothenburg on Nov 29.

Chanderpaul's near miss



RAWALPINDI, Nov 30: Opening batsman Aamir Sohail hit a century as Pakistan scored 122 for two in reply to West Indies' first innings total of 303 on the second day of the second Test at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium Sunday, reports AP.

Brian Lara dropped a waist-high catch in the first slip off medium fast Ian Bishop with Sohail on 38 and the home team scored 75 for two.

Lara missed a sitter in the first Test at Peshawar when he floored an easy catch of Inzamam-ul-Haq at the same position which cost them dearly as West Indies lost the match by an innings and 19 runs.

Bad light once again brought an early end to the play Sunday — 14 overs before schedule — with Sohail surviving on 62 and Inzamam unbeaten on 20.

Sohail reached his 14th Test half-century through another sloppy fielding, this time the ball going to the boundary through the legs of Bishop at mid-off. Sohail batted down a bit after he was let off the hook and scored the last 12 runs in his 50 off 48 balls.

Pakistan lost the wickets of Saeed Anwar and Ijaz Ahmed before tea. Anwar, who hit Ambrose for two successive boundaries edged to wicketkeeper David Williams while trying to guide the ball through the slips corridor for third time. Ijaz (40) flashed wildly to Rose just before tea and Philo Wallace took a comfortable catch at third man boundary.

The four-pronged West Indian pace attack spearheaded by Curtly Ambrose and skipper Courtney Walsh were thrashed for 50 runs off 67 balls after Pakistan started their first innings midway into the lunch session. Sohail lifted Bishop for a huge six over mid-wicket in his first over.

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Earlier, Shivnarine Chanderpaul missed an ideal opportunity to score his second Test century but played a key innings of 95 in West Indies' reasonable first innings total of 303.

Chanderpaul, the 23-year-old left-hander, hit 13 boundaries during his 267 minutes in the centre and faced 154 balls. He remained in the nervous nineties for 35 minutes before paceman Waqar Younis had him leg before in his fifth over with the second new ball.

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