

Sport

Imran Khan's allegation

LAHORE, Pakistan, Jan 14: Former Pakistan cricket great turned politician Imran Khan Wednesday said he would challenge in court the seizure of tiles from his wife Jemima on charges of smuggling, reports AFP.

The seizure is part of the government's victimisation policy," Imran told reporters here.

He said the government was "crumbling" in the face of law and order problems and an economic crunch and since my party poses a serious challenge to the ruling party the government has launched a vilification campaign against me and my family.

Pakistani customs officials intercepted a consignment of hundreds of tiles in December and have registered a case against Jemima, the daughter of the late Franco-British Tycoon Sir James Goldsmith, for illegally exporting antique tiles.

The decorative tiles were destined for her mother Annabelle Goldsmith in London. Jemima Goldsmith married Imran Khan in 1995 and settled in Lahore.

The couple said the shipment was lawful as the tiles were purchased from a local market.

But the customs department referred the tiles to the archeological department which has declared them centuries-old antiques dating from the Mughal era.

Customs officials believe the tiles were originally stolen from a site in southern Thatta district.

Imran who has formed Movement for Justice Party, did not elaborate when he will challenge the confiscation.

He reiterated the tiles were not antiques. They were purchased from Islamabad and the government allegations are "politically motivated and baseless," he added.

"In order to clarify our position following the registration of the case against my wife, we will go to the court."

Export of antiques is an offence punishable by a fine or a maximum imprisonment of five years.

Proteas on 'mission whitewash'



CENTURION, South Africa, Jan 14 (Reuters/ Internet): West Indies will be under extreme pressure to avoid a 5-0 whitewash when the final Test against South Africa starts at Centurion Park on Friday.

Having lost the first four Tests on this inaugural tour by West Indies of the Republic, Brian Lara's men are feeling the heat from their supporters and a South African team bent on ending the series in style with a fifth victory.

"We all know the West Indian people are behind us, we've had phone calls and faxes of encouragement.

The people back home have become used to having a winning team, and they are naturally disappointed in the way we have played.

"But at least we feel we have their support."

The visitors' moral suffered a further blow when the squad for the one-day series was announced at the weekend and it was learned five members of the squad would be returning home after the fifth test, to be replaced by four newcomers.

It's the first time the West Indies have selected a one-day team during a Test series and several of the players have experienced a negative reaction because they know they are going home," Lara admitted.

Injured fast bowlers Courtney Walsh and Franklin Rose, opening batsmen Stuart Williams and Clayton Lambert and change bowler Mervyn Dillon are returning home, with all-rounder Keith Arthuron, paceman Reon King, left-arm spinner Neil McGarrell and Keith Semple scheduled to arrive on Thursday.

"We know we still have to try and be positive, but I won't pretend that's easy."

Vastly experienced fast bowler Curtly Ambrose has been retained despite the knee injury which saw him limp off the field during the third test at Kingsmead in Durban and not play in the fourth at Newlands in Cape Town. Lara said if Ambrose was not fit to play at Centurion Park he would expect King to take his place.

Wretched batting by the top six and assorted injuries among the fast bowlers are the main reasons for their lack of success.

But off the field the pre-tour dispute involving the West Indies Cricket Board still lingers, with reports filtering through of rifts within the touring

party.

The upshot has been West Indies winning only two of the 13 matches they have played so far, and matters could easily worsen with seven one-day internationals scheduled to follow the Test series.

The ruthlessly efficient South Africans have rarely been challenged in cruising to four emphatic victories.

Lara, however, has not lost heart completely. "If we are better prepared upstairs then I've got to believe we do have a chance of regaining some pride," he said.

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HANSIE CRONJE

No South African team has

won a series 5-0, the closest be-

ing the 4-0 triumph by Ali

Bacher's side over Bill Lawry's

Australians in 1969-70. Cap-

tain Hansie Cronje has said he

wants to achieve that target in

this series.

"Our most important prepara-

tion is mental," Lara said.

"It's very, very tough to be 4-0

down in a series, especially

when it's the first time it has

happened to any of the players.

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Boxing Hall of Fame's 6 new members

CANASTOTA, New York,

Jan 14 (AFP): English manager Mickey Duff, Thai former bantamweight champion Khaochai Galaxy and former featherweight champion Eusebio Pedroza of Panama were among six people named here to the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

Promoter Bob Arum, former heavyweight great Jimmy Bivins and publicist Irving Rudd were also named to the honour list, along with 11 posthumous inductees. Enshrinement will be here on June 13.

The posthumous honorees were Lew Jenkins, Vicente Saldivar, Johnny Coulon, Sam McVey, Freddie Steele, Lew Tendler, Giuseppe Ballarati, Murray Goodman, Jimmy Johnston, Tim O'Rourke and Bill Richmond.

Double trouble for Moeti

JOHANNESBURG, January 14 (Reuters/ Internet): South African vice-captain John Moeti has been suspended by his club after refusing to play last weekend and could also miss his country's African Nations Cup qualifier against Mauritius next week.

Orlando Pirates officials said on Thursday they had suspended Moeti, their captain, who refused to play in a league match last Sunday because of a pay dispute.

South African Football Association (SAFA) officials said they would also leave Moeti out of the 18-man squad for the trip to Mauritius if the matter was not resolved by next Wednesday.

South Africa have called up Pollen Ndanya of Kaizer Chiefs to replace Swiss-based striker Shaun Bartlett who has withdrawn from the squad because he has not recovered from a knee operation.

No decision on a possible replacement for Moeti has been made yet, SAFA said.

Minto on the move

LISBON, Jan 14 (Reuters/ Internet): Benfica defender Scott Minto was set to sign for West Ham on Thursday in a 1.65 million US dollar return to English soccer after 18 months with the former European champions.

Benfica spokesman Jose Teixeira confirmed that the London side would pay 1.24 million dollars up front for the English player with the balance to be settled later.

Minto, who joined Benfica from Chelsea, is a left-sided defender.

Aston Villa's unsettled defender Gary Charles was discussing terms for a possible move to the Lisbon club, Teixeira said.

Charles plays on the right where Benfica's Scottish coach Graeme Souness has been looking to strengthen his side.

Coventry sign Bosnian Konjic

LONDON, Jan 14 (Reuters/ Internet): Coventry City have signed Bosnian defender Mohammed Konjic from AS Monaco for 3.30 million US dollars.

The 28 year-old is rated as one of the top defenders in France and has captained Bosnia in 33 of their 34 international matches since they became an independent football nation. "We've been looking for an experienced, top class defender all season and are delighted to have signed Konjic," said Coventry chairman Bryan Richardson, who flew to Monaco on Wednesday to complete negotiations.

Fans have the last laugh

MANCHESTER, Jan 14: (Reuters/ Internet): Fan power forced Ian Stott to resign as chairman of English second division Oldham Athletic on Tuesday, seriously damaging his bid to become the new head of the Football Association.

Stott's departure follows his announcement last week of a proposal to merge his club with rivals Bury and Rochdale to form a new club named Manchester North End.

Stott has now stepped down to the role of vice-chairman with David Brierley taking over the chairmanship after angry fans launched a campaign to stop the proposed merger.

But Stott, 64, refused to withdraw from the race to become FA chairman and claimed his statement about a merger had been taken out of context.

"Unfortunately some of my quotes were taken out of context, and I felt that I had inadvertently embarrassed the club to such an extent that it would be in everyone's best interests if I stepped down as chairman and handed the reins over to somebody else," Stott said.

Last Friday Stott was quoted as saying: "A merger with Bury and Rochdale is something I am giving serious consideration to. I have already discussed the possibility of merging the three clubs into one with my counterparts at both Rochdale and Bury, and like me, they can see the benefits of such a venture."

All three clubs, based within 10 miles (16 kms) of each other on the outskirts of

Manchester, have financial problems, but none are in imminent danger of folding.

Carl Marsden, who set up a supporters group to fight the merger, believes Stott had to resign because of the weight of opinion against him among fans.

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CRYPTOQUIP

G' E X Z F D R M Z X Y V V E X D

B' U Y Q X K B X O M M Z F M

Z X ' O F V I F K O V G Q X R

M U I X F D O F R R V X O Z U X O

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THE BABY GORILLA EATING A BANANA IS PROBABLY AN APE-PEELING SIGHT.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: E equals V

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

PCB, Akram looking forward to India tour

Fingers crossed for govt decision

Council (ICC) meeting in New Zealand.

"We want the tour to go ahead but security is the prime priority and it's up to the Indian government to give our players hundred per cent safe security," the Pakistan Cricket Board chairman said.

After Hindu militants last week dug up the pitch in New Delhi where the first Test was to have been played, Pakistan cricket authorities sent a special envoy to assess the situation.

"Brigadier Saeed Rafi is in India, he is a security specialist.

and he will enlighten us about the situation," said Mahmood.

The final decision will be taken in the light of Rafi's report.

The Pakistan cricket team is scheduled to arrive in India on January 21 for their first Test series on Indian soil for 12 years. But Hindu zealots have threatened to sabotage the games to protest against Pakistan's alleged support for Indian insurgents.

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee is determined to hold the series and has promised maximum security.

Mahmood said the Indian cricket board president briefed him about the situation during the ICC meeting, Raj Singh Dungarpur was updating me on the issue and he was also very keen the tour should go on.

Mahmood said that if the tour were cancelled the Pakistani players would concentrate on training for the World Cup in May-June.

Meanwhile, newly appointed Pakistan skipper Wasim Akram Wednesday called for the tour to go ahead, saying there was massive interest in the contest in both countries.

"As far as we know the tour is still on," Wasim told reporters.

The ace Pakistani paceman said the tour would provide the team an opportunity to build up for the World Cup.

He said he believed sporting links would do a world of good in establishing better relations between the two countries.

Wasim said field hockey, squash and football players had been visiting India but the cricket team's tour had more importance because of the game's "greater following" in Pakistan and India.

Cricket matches between the two countries have always been tension packed and exciting, he said, stressing he never felt pressure by playing in India. Wasim reiterated his earlier suggestion about playing Test matches on neutral territory, it is possible and matches can be played in Sharjah, Dhaka and Toronto.

known about for some time and it is an issue which must be addressed."

Such a condition could seriously undermine the German bid, said DFB general secretary Horst Schmitt.

"Our bid has no chance if we don't meet that requirement and cannot guarantee tax exemption," Schmitt was quoted as saying by German daily Berliner Zeitung.

The ruling could also damage other contenders who include England, South Africa, Egypt, Brazil, Morocco, Nigeria and Ghana. FIFA's executive committee will decide in March 2000 which country will stage the finals.

England's senior bid officials were unavailable for immediate comment as they were returning from the Football Expo in Cannes.

But Danny Jordaan, chief executive of the South African bid told Reuters in Cannes: "We knew that the tax issue might come up, but one can't look at the re-working of the tax arrangement in isolation of the total package."

We would certainly ask for a quid pro quo on the tax situation. Perhaps if we did not tax the profits, we would raise taxes through Customs and Excise in some way."

Earlier, FIFA spokesman Andreas Herren declined to confirm the report, saying the documents listing FIFA's requirements which will be submitted to the bidding countries was still being drafted.

"I can't tell you if the reports are true because I don't have that printed document, which will be finalised before the end of the month," he said.

Herren did say that FIFA, as it did