

No cricket in 2002 C'wealth Games

WELLINGTON, July 20: Organisers of the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester plan to drop one-day cricket but rugby sevens, hockey and netball will remain, the New Zealand Olympic Committee said today, reports Reuters.

Organisers have finalised a list of 14 individual sports and three team sports they planned to host. New Zealand Olympic Committee chief executive Michael Hooper said in a statement on his return from a fact-finding mission to Manchester.

Formal decisions on the sports to be included in the games are not due to be made by the general assembly of the Commonwealth Games Federation until October.

"One-day cricket has been excluded from the programme ... but judo, table tennis, triathlon and wrestling have been added," said the committee, which also handles Commonwealth Games matters in New Zealand.

The team sports made their debut at last year's Kuala Lumpur Games, although netball had been a demonstration sport at the Auckland Games in 1990.

South Africa took the cricket gold medal but the matches were not officially recognised by the International Cricket Council (ICC).

The ICC has suggested an eight-a-side short version of the one-day game be played in Manchester.

At one stage, the Manchester organisers had suggested only one team sport be hosted there — netball.

Despite dropping cricket, Hooper said the addition of other individual sports would make Manchester the biggest Commonwealth Games ever.

He said the individual sports are aquatics (swimming, diving, synchronised swimming, badminton, boxing, cycling, gymnastics, judo, lawn bowls, shooting, squash, table tennis, triathlon, weightlifting, and wrestling).

Beijing Marathon in October

BEIJING, July 20: The Beijing International Marathon, billed as one of the 10 largest marathons in the world, will be held here on October 8, reports AFP.

The marathon, inaugurated in 1981, will set off from central Tiananmen Square and weave its way west along the Avenue of Eternal Peace (Chang'an Jie), Yuetan Park, and the Diaoyutai Guesthouse before ending at the Olympic Stadium.

Shang Xutang, General Secretary of the Chinese Athletics Association, said he expected over 20,000 runners to take part in the race.

The deadline for registration is August 31.

France's Davis Cup semifinal at Pau

PARIS, July 20: Pau was chosen as the venue for the France versus Belgium Davis Cup semifinal from September 24-26, the French Tennis Federation said on Monday, reports AFP.

It will be held in the same Pau stadium in which they beat Brazil 3-2 at the weekend in the quarterfinals. France won the Davis Cup in 1991 after playing the semifinal at Pau.

Sydney braces for big crowds

SYDNEY, June 20: Central Sydney will become the "party capital of the world" with an estimated 8.2 million visitors expected during the 2000 Olympic Games, Australia's Olympics minister, Michael Knight, said today, reports Reuters.

In announcing how Sydney, a city with a population of around four million, would cope with an additional 400,000 visitors to its central business district (CBD) each day, Knight warned "the city will need to change to cope with massive crowd movements".

Knight released two booklets explaining how Sydney will celebrate and cope with the Olympics in September 2000.

City trains will run 24 hours a day during the Games, streets will be closed to traffic to create pedestrian corridors, casual parking will be removed, and city shops and food halls will stay open until 11:00 pm.

Giants video screens will be erected in the CBD to relay live coverage from Olympic venues as well as visitor information. Improved harbour walkways will allow uninterrupted walks around the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Opera House. "We're not going to pretend that the city won't be congested and it won't be difficult, but it's also going to be a very exciting time and we're determined to minimise the disruption and maximise the enjoyment," Knight said.

The Olympic city will earn the title of party capital of the world as an estimated collective 8.2 million people flock to the CBD to celebrate and soak up the atmosphere," he said.

Olympic officials today also suggested city businesses not involved in the Games should allow people flexible working hours to avoid travelling during peak times.

"Such compromise is essential to enable central Sydney to revel in the Olympic spirit, but also to continue to operate effectively," said David Richmond, head of the Olympic Coordination Authority, which is building Games infrastructure.

Stand-still at PCB



ISLAMABAD, July 20: Efforts to put up an alternative management for the suspended Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has been expedited amid reports that top cricket administrators like Arif Abbasi, Majid Khan and Shahid Raffi would make a comeback into the country's cricket setup, reports PTI.

Mujibur Rahman, the newly-appointed PCB ad-hoc committee chairman, is reportedly cutting short his visit to Qatar and rushing home tomorrow and expected to immediately get down to constituting his team within a few days.

Javed Zaman during his meeting was briefed by Waqar Ahmed about the follow up action taken in the wake of suspension of the entire PCB management, including chairman Khalid Mahmood.

Javed Zaman, has refrained from reaching to comments by Mahmood against the PCB's suspension. "Khalid is my close friend and I have great respect for him. I would not like to make any comment on his statement," he said.

According to information available here, the names of a number of well-known cricket administrators are being mentioned for inclusion in the ad-hoc committee.

Majid Khan, former Pakistan skipper and cousin of Imran Khan, is considered a close

against the national team following their abysmal defeat to Australia in the World Cup final.

The PCB offices have been closed down till Rehman's arrival. The President, who is PCB's chief patron, has authorised Rehman to pick three or four persons to the committee to run the board.

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Speaking from Doha, Rehman, who heads the Redco Business Group which has close links with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's Ittefaq Group, said his first task was to restore reputation of the Pakistan team and resolve the current crises through legal means.

He said qualifying for the World Cup final was a big achievement for the Pakistan team, but warned that if the loss in the final was deliberate strong action would be taken against anyone involved.

Taylor against two teams



SYDNEY, July 20: Former captain Mark Taylor said Tuesday Australia's World Cup cricket triumph didn't justify the decision to select separate Test and limited-overs teams, reports AFP.

Taylor, who retired from international cricket earlier this year, said he hoped the two national teams would come closer together.

He said Australia had gone "reasonably well" under his successor Steve Waugh.

Left-handed opening batsman Taylor retired from all first-class cricket at the end of last summer but lost the Australian limited-overs captaincy to Waugh at the start of the 1997-98 season when the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) opted for separate Test and one-day sides.

Taylor pointed out it was established Test stars and match winners rather than limited-overs specialists who had been the major contributors to Australia's World Cup triumph in

England last month. Asked whether the victory justified the ACB's controversial policy of opting for separate

rate teams Taylor replied: "No." "If you look at the World Cup final sides in 1996 and 1999 there were only three different players, so really we had pretty well the same side as three years ago, so I still don't believe that's the right way to go," he said.

"I'm very hopeful that in Australian cricket we will get the two sides closer together in years to come."

"I'm still a great believer in the team environment, that's something I tried very hard as a captain to instill in all my players, when I played to put the team first."

"I don't think when you have leaders of the team who are different for the one-dayers to the Test matches you can get that system working at its best."

"If you look at the World Cup, we played very well, we got ourselves out of a bind early on, but it was our senior players who got us through."

Since Waugh assumed the Test captaincy, Australia drew 2-2 with the West Indies in the Caribbean and won the World Cup.

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MARK TAYLOR

Kiwis in good mood



LONDON, July 20 (Internet report): New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming insists his team are in good shape ahead of Thursday's second Test against England at Lord's.

Fleming endured a long day in the field at Canterbury yesterday along with the rest of his side, but said: "We are pleased with our preparation. We are in good heart but that doesn't win Test matches."

"We have got to be really focused on the job but we are all looking forward to the Lord's Test because it will be a great occasion."

The exact make-up for the Kiwis line-up on Thursday has still to be decided but Fleming was relieved to leave Canterbury on Sunday night with no further injury worries on top of those already well documented.

Allott and Dion Nash should be ready to spearhead the attack against England.

Another plus for Fleming was the long stint by left-arm spinner Daniel Vettori who shared the wickets with Chris Cairns — man-of-the-match with a 7-116 return — against Kent who salvaged a draw to remain undefeated against the Kiwis in nine matches stretching back to 1927.

Another interested spectator was the Kent coach and former New Zealander opener John Wright.

Wright, overlooked for the job of coach to succeed Steve Rixon when he leaves the job in September, had more than one eye on his fellow countrymen.

He said: "I thought Cairns bowled as well as I've seen him for a long time and Vettori also did well. But I must say I am pleased that we held out for the draw."

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