

Fatwa' for breaking Ramadan fast!

CASABLANCA, Dec 27: African champions Raja Casablanca have been allowed to break the fast during the month of Ramadan to allow them to compete in next month's first ever world club football championships, according to a press report here on Sunday, reports AFP.

Moroccan daily Al Ittihad Al Ichrairi reported a theologian, invited by the club to rule on the question, imposed a fatwa or religious decree, permitting staff and players to postpone the fast to a later date.

The eight-strong January 5 to 15 inaugural event in Rio de Janeiro is the brainchild of FIFA president Sepp Blatter.

During Ramadan, muslims abstain from eating, drinking and sexual relations during daylight hours.

The Ramadan fast, one of the five pillars of Islam, can be postponed because of illness, travel, war, or a mission important to the interests of the nation. However it is generally believed the fast must then be observed at a later, convenient date.

Rain slows

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of the Indian attack with his 10th half-century.

Srinath, who gave India the initial breakthrough on Sunday, was hammered for 101 runs from his 22 overs.

Prasad went for 88 runs from his 24, while Agarkar finished with one for 64 from 22.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at the close of play on the second day of the second cricket Test between Australia and India at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Monday:

AUSTRALIA: First innings (overnight 138-3)

Slater c Srinath b V Prasad 91

Blewett b Srinath 2

Langer lbw b Srinath 8

M Waugh lbw b Agarkar 41

S Waugh c M Prasad b V Prasad 32

Ponting not out 59

Gilchrist not out 77

Extras (lb-8, b-1, nb-12, w-1) 22

Total: (For five wickets) 332

Fall of wickets: 1-4; 2-28; 3-

123; 4-192; 5-197

To bat: S Warne, D Fleming, G McGrath, B Lee.

Bowler O M R W

Srinath 22 4 101 2

Agarkar 22 6 64 1

V Prasad 24 6 88 2

Ganguly 2 0 10 0

Kumble 23 3 60 0

Nasser holds England together



DURBAN, Dec 27 (Reuters/AFP): England captain Nasser Hussain led from the front with his eighth Test century before bad light followed by rain put a premature end to the second day's play in the third Test against South Africa today.

When play ended 16.2 overs early, Hussain was 146 not out with England on 366 for nine in their first innings.

Hussain has been at the crease for a marathon 10 hours and 35 minutes during which he has faced 463 balls and hit 17 fours.

Hussain's century, on the board in seven hours and 45 minutes, off 343 balls, was the third-slowest Test hundred by an Englishman. So his innings is the fifth-longest by an England batsman.

Only two batsmen have batted longer for England before reaching three figures. Peter Richardson took 488 minutes against South Africa in Johannesburg in 1956-57 while Clive Readley needed one minute less against New Zealand in Auckland in 1977-78.

It was Hussain's eighth Test hundred and his first since making 105 against South Africa at Lord's in 1998.

With Hussain at the crease when play ended was Phil Tufnell on nought, who found himself taking guard after South Africa claimed six wickets for 72 runs.

Two of them fell in consecutive deliveries to medium-pacer Hansie Cronje, who trapped Andrew Flintoff and Andy Caddick lbw to end the day with two for five in seven overs.

The bulk of England's runs came in a fourth-wicket stand of 156 between Hussain and Alec Stewart, which ended an hour after lunch when Stewart was trapped lbw by an in-swinger from paceman Mornantau Hayward for 95.

Stewart was at the crease for 202 minutes, faced 149 deliveries and hit 15 fours in his attacking innings.

At tea, England had reached 336 for five.

On Sunday, England, jeered by a holiday crowd of 15,500, crawled to 135 for two on the opening day of the third Test at Kingsmead today.

Bad light ended play 4.5 overs early, saving the tourists from the embarrassing possi-

bility of compiling the lowest score in a full day's play in South Africa.

Peter May's 1956-7 England team tallied just 138 in a day in Port Elizabeth.

England captain Nasser Hussain won the toss and elected to bat despite concerns that the pitch would be under-prepared because of last week's heavy rain.

However, the surface turned out to be sound offering little movement off the seam and no swing through the air despite the humid conditions.

South Africa's bowlers soon

began to feel the 44 degree heat but the English batsmen failed to take advantage of the un-threatening attack and concentrated on survival rather than scoring runs.

"I'm sure their plan is to lay a foundation and press on from there," said South African coach Graham Ford. "They can't continue like this."

England coach Duncan Fletcher sympathised with the spectators.

"It must be frustrating for the public, but from our point of view it's important that we're only two down," he said.

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