

Star Sport

DHAKA, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 2000 Email: dssports @ bdonline.com

Column One

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- Who is the number one women tennis player at the moment?
Hings Pierce V Williams
- Who won the European Champions' League?
M United Real Madrid Lazio
- Who won the UEFA Cup?
Valencia Galatasaray Fiorentina
- Who lifted national schools cricket title?
St Joseph Misingh Zila Cig Khastagor
- Who is the coach of Bangladesh football team?
Harrison Van Gaal Shakir

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SPORTS TALK



Merv Hughes
(Former Australian fast bowler)
"When Australia lose, we look for reasons. When England lose, they look for excuses."

Quader hosts reception for reporters



Chairman of the National Sports Council (NSC) and State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader yesterday hosted a reception in honour of the journalists covering the Asia Cup here, reports BSS.

Journalists from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and local journalists from different dailies and news agencies attended the reception.

President of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) Sabir Hossain Chowdhury, and NSC and BCB officials were also present on the occasion.

Asian women's jr h'ball from July 25

Hosts Bangladesh will play China in the inaugural match of the 6th Asian Women's junior handball championship which will start here on July 25, reports UNB.

Seven teams, split in two groups, will compete at the Mirpur Shaheed Shuhrawardy National Indoor Stadium.

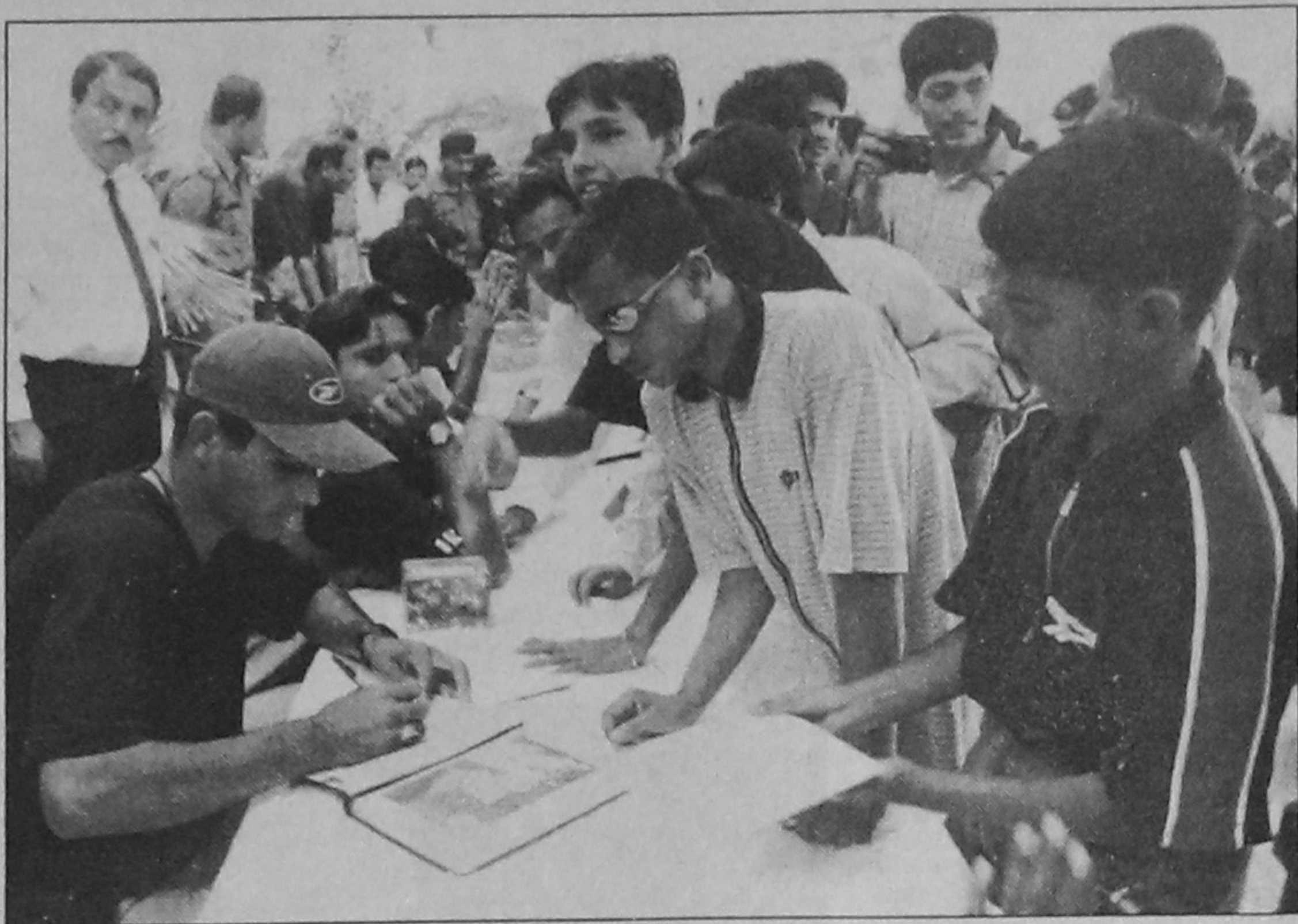
Four top teams will qualify for the World Junior Championship to be held in Hungary from July 29 to August 12 next year.

The Group A team consists of four-time champions South Korea, Kazakhstan, Chinese Taipei and India while Group B comprises of China, Japan and hosts Bangladesh.

The Nepalese team, which confirmed their participation in late, may also be included in the meet subject to the approval of the Asian Handball Federation.

If Nepal gets the permission, they will be placed in the three-team Group B.

Meanwhile, an organising committee headed by Commerce Minister M Abdul Jalil has been formed.



Pakistan all-rounder Abdur Razzaq obliging autograph hunters at the Sheraton Hotel yesterday.
—Star photo by Amran Hossain

Woolmer behind Cronje



JOHANNESBURG, June 6: Former South African cricket coach Bob Woolmer has come out in support of sacked captain Hansie Cronje, saying he should be allowed to play international cricket again, reports said on Tuesday, according to AFP.

"Hansie should be brought back into the fold as quickly as possible. He has admitted that he has done something wrong and that should be taken into account," The Pretoria News quoted Woolmer as telling reporters in Cape Town on Monday.

Woolmer said he believed Cronje, who was fired on April 11 for taking money from an Indian bookmaker for information and forecasts on matches, should not be treated more harshly than Australian cricketers who had done the same.

"Mark Waugh and Shane Warne were convicted of the same offence by the Australian Cricket Board and given a monetary fine," he said.

"If Hansie has done the same as them why should we be any different?"

Woolmer, who coached the Proteas from 1994 to 1999 and is now with English County Championship side Warwickshire, is due to testify before the King Commission which is probing the Cronje scandal and will start holding public hearings on Wednesday.

Woolmer was Monday added to a list of 43 witnesses who will testify at the Commission.

Woolmer is in South Africa to promote his autobiography and said he was keen to testify, particularly about an offer to the South African team to "throw" a match in Mumbai, India, in December 1996.

Cronje will be the key witness in the hearings to be conducted by retired high court judge Edwin King. But it has not yet been decided when Cronje will appear.

Cronje is the only South African player to have admitted taking money from an Indian bookmaker but he can expect close questioning on the role of other players who were mentioned in a conversation, allegedly with bookmaker Sanjiv Chawla, which was taped by police in New Delhi, India earlier this year.

Although the Commission does not have access to the tapes from India, the transcripts released by Indian police when the scandal broke on April 7 were widely reported in South Africa.



HANSIE CRONJE

On the basis of the evidence collected when the South African team were in India earlier this year, Indian police announced that charges had been filed against Cronje, Herschelle Gibbs, Nicky Boje and Pieter Strydom. All four players have been subpoenaed to testify before Judge King.

Commission secretary John Bacon said Monday that he had issued 42 subpoenas. But he cancelled plans to hold a press conference to announce the order of witnesses. "We now expect to make the announcement at the start of the hearings on Wednesday," said Bacon.

Woolmer has indicated that he will testify about an offer to the South African team to "throw" a match in Mumbai, India, in December 1996.

He said the team turned it down and he was sure Cronje would never have thrown a match.

"Hansie was up and down in his mood swings, but he is a wonderful person and would never throw a match," Woolmer said.

"From 1994 to 1999 he stepped onto the field with only one goal and that was to win."

The comments mark a departure for Woolmer who, when the scandal broke, was one of the first to declare Cronje's career over.

He Monday blamed Cronje's behaviour on the former captain having enjoyed too much power, and a perverse sense of humour.

"My view is that he fooled around with the bookies, when I say that I mean that he would tease them."

"I just reckon that he bled too much and got caught. I would perceive that he got too much power and felt invulnerable," he told The Star newspaper.

Cronje was international cricket's longest-serving skipper and the most successful one in South Africa's history.

The King Commission is mandated to investigate the period between November 1 last year and April 17, and the 1996 tour of India and will hear testimony from some 43 witnesses.

Nat'l soccer Easy wins for Noakhali, Army

Hosts Noakhali and Bangladesh Army made flying start in the 21st Sher-e-Bangla Cup National Football Championship which began at the Shaheed Bhulal Stadium in Noakhali yesterday, reports UNB.

General Secretary of Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) Harun-ur-Rashid, MP, inaugurated the 12-team final round of the 11-day meet.

In the opening match, Army outplayed Tangail 4-0 after dominating the first session by a solitary goal scored by Nasiruddin in the 34th minute.

Shahidul Islam struck twice in the 59th and 75th minutes while Rashidul Hassan netted the other goal in the 65th minute for the winners.

Nasiruddin of the Army was adjudged the player-of-the-match.

In the day's other match, Noakhali earned a facile 3-0 goals victory over Comilla at the same venue after leading the first half 2-0.

National stars Ifaz Ahmed, Rakib Hossain and Sourav Majumder Raju scored for the hosts in the 31st, 44th and 58th minutes respectively.

Parvez of Noakhali was named the player-of-the-match.

Narsindgi will meet Pabna at 2 pm while Jessore encounter Bhola at 4 pm today at the same venue.

Rookie gets nod Pakistan name team for SL

Pakistan included new batsman Kaiser Abbas for their tour of Sri Lanka beginning next week, the top official of Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said here yesterday, reports BSS.

They will play three Tests against the islanders followed by a triangular tournament involving Pakistan, South Africa and hosts Sri Lanka. Shahid Afridi, who is now touring Bangladesh with the Asia Cup team, would be given rest during the Tests. But he will re-join the team during the triangular tournament, PCB president Lt General Tauqir Zia told this news agency at his hotel suite.

Experienced leg-spinner Mushtaq Ahmed will replace Afridi.

PCB yesterday announced a 16-member team for Sri Lanka keeping the Asia Cup team, except for Afridi, intact. Wicket-keeper Moin Khan will lead the team.

Younis Khan was re-included, PCB president said.

He said Kaiser, a club-mate of Imran Nazir in Punjab, drew attention of the selectors by his superb performance in the middle-order and "I hope he will prove his worth."

THE TEAM: Moin Khan (captain), Imran Nazir, Saeed Anwar, Mohammad Wasim, Inzamam-ul-Haq, Yousuf Youhana, Younis Khan, Kaiser Abbas, Abdur Razzaq, Azhar Mahmood, Wasim Akram, Muhammad Akram, Arshad Khan, Shabbir Ahmed, Shoaib Malik and Mushtaq Ahmed.

Coach: Javed Mianand.

Squillari in last eight

PARIS, June 6: Unseeded Argentine Franco Squillari became the first Argentine to make a Grand Slam quarterfinal in a decade here on Tuesday when he completed his rain-delayed fourth-round match with a victory over 15th-seeded Moroccan Younes El Aynaoui, reports AFP.

Squillari, already two sets up overnight, won 6-4, 6-1, 6-3 and will now face the winner of another match held over from Monday night pitting ninth-seeded Australian Lleyton Hewitt and Spaniard Albert Costa.

The Spaniard had led 6-3, 4-4 in that match before play was called off for the day but Hewitt took the second set 6-4 after play resumed.

Squillari has exceeded all expectations after not having made it past the third round of any previous Grand Slam he has contested. The last Argentine player to make the last eight in any Slam was Franco Davin here in 1991.

With some three hours having been lost to rain on Monday, Tuesday saw a heavy schedule of matches with two men's quarterfinal matches to come and all four women's quarters.

A battle of two former men's champions was awaited on Centre Court with 1997 winner Gustavo Kuerten of Brazil, the fifth seed, facing Russian fourth seed Yevgeny Kafelnikov, who lifted the title the year before him.

That encounter was to be followed by an all-Spanish clash between 10th-seeded former finalist Alex Corretja and new hope Juan Carlos Ferrero, seeded 16 and a French Open debutant at the age of 20.

Another three-time winner, American, Monica Seles, was meeting Mary Pierce of France and Conchita Martinez facing fellow Spaniard and qualifier Marta Marrero.

Saeed to go a la Viv



When we speak of Saeed Anwar, we usually associate the Pakistani southpaw with sublime batting. He possesses an array of strokes on both sides of the wicket. He first came to prominence after hammering three consecutive centuries in Sharjah, UAE. Only an equally brilliant Brian Lara innings stole Anwar's thunder in one particular final during the 90s. Since then he holds the record for the highest number of runs in a one-day match. His hunger for runs will never die either.

On the eve of the Pepsi Asia Cup final, Lenin Gani of The Daily Star Sport caught up with the dynamic left-hander at the Poolside of Hotel Sheraton yesterday evening. The excerpts of the conversation follow:

Daily Star Sport: Were you always left-handed? Do you think it helps?

Saeed Anwar: Yeah, I was always left-handed and it helps in the sense that there were a few left-handers in the beginning but now there are plenty. Also bowling to such players was difficult because they were more used to bowling to right-handed batsmen. The left-handers constantly made them change their line of attack. So it's somewhat difficult for the right-arm bowlers. I'm naturally left-handed. However, I eat roti (bread) with the right hand.

DSS: Do you regret giving up the captaincy?

SA: No I don't regret it. Obviously, captaining the national

team is an honour. For me it was a privilege. But if the team isn't doing well under one's captaincy then it is (more) difficult. Although I was performing well but I wasn't lucky enough since some of my teammates were getting pretty good job. Playing under him is alright.

DSS: What do you think of the Bangladesh wicket?

SA: The pitch was absolutely great. It was no doubt batsman-friendly and you could and should score plenty of runs. But the weather didn't permit me to score many runs. Because it's only been two months since I have returned to competitive cricket. So it's difficult to start straight away. Look at Brian Lara, he has only scored 1 and 2 in his first two innings. I'm muddling the ball pretty okay especially against India the other day. All I require now is match fitness and inshallah I'll be back in my spree again.

DSS: How is the knee?

SA: The knee problem is totally rectified. The recuperation period has taken time. There is still a little pain. But I'm hopeful it will go away with time. If I didn't have the operation it might have got worse. And so I would have quit cricket even. The surgery was done in England. Now I'm looking forward to playing as much cricket as possible for Pakistan. I'm not interested in records. I will just follow my idol Viv Richards from now on and enjoy playing my own style.

DSS: What do you hope to achieve during the coming tour of Sri Lanka?

SA: Well the first goal is to get back into form, score more runs and centuries. But the main objective is to win the series. The Sri Lankans came twice and beat us on both occasions in Pakistan. The last time we went to Sri Lanka it ended as a drawn series and before that we beat them two nil. So probably we want to exact revenge for the defeat in Pakistan.

DSS: There was a time you were ranked alongside Sachin Tendulkar in terms of one-day centuries. Why has your form slipped since?

SA: My form hasn't slipped. But it is true that after the World Cup I have not scored a one-day hundred. The reason is I've played under so much intense pain. I had knee problems for the last one year plus I think I've played 50 or 60 fewer ODIs than Sachin. So, I think that our century rate is 10 matches per century. He has got 25 hundreds from 250 games. If I play 50 or 60 one-dayers more I might score six centuries even.

DSS: Nowadays there is a tendency for you to get a good start in ODIs, but you can't convert it into a big score. Why?

SA: That's the problem I have been having for the last ten months. Since the last two centuries of the World Cup I have been taking pain-killer injections to reduce the discomfort. But after scoring 30-40 runs the pain comes back. So, all my concentration was fixed on knee injury. Batting requires a lot of concentration. One has

See page 15

PCB pledges all support for Bangladesh



Pakistan want to celebrate Bangladesh's attaining Test status by playing in their maiden match.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) president Lt General Tauqir Zia said here yesterday.

"Pakistan will give unconditional support to Bangladesh in getting Test status in the meeting of the International Cricket Council (ICC) in London later this month, the PCB president told BSS at his hotel suite.

"Already Pakistan consider Bangladesh as emerging Test playing nation as it received supports from different cricket board across the world," said Zia, who is also president of Asian Cricket Council (ACC).

Zia, a former first class cricketer who crossed 53 birthday Monday, lauded the

role of Bangladesh people and their huge enthusiasm about cricket.

"Already Dhaka has achieved reputation as a neutral playing ground in South Asia and we will look into international calendar to play a triangular tournament in Dhaka to raise fund for Bangladesh cricket, if we are approached by Bangladesh," the PCB president said.

He also stressed the need to keep cricket above all political and financial controversies and said Pakistan and India played many matches when bilateral relations between the two countries were "not that much cordial."

The PCB chief termed Wasim Akram as one of the most intelligent player who had con-

See page 15

Some solace for Zimbabwe

England clinch series



NOTTINGHAM, England, June 6: The second and final Test between England and Zimbabwe ended in a draw here on Monday, leaving England one-nil series winners, reports AFP.

Needing an impossible 237 to win in 13 overs, Zimbabwe were 25 for one at the close. Guy Whittall 12 not out and Murray Goodwin one not out.

But the tourists could look back on a clear moral victory after bowling England out for 147 following their declaration before the start of play.

Zimbabwe's bowlers swung the ball far more than their England counterparts as well as finding more life from the pitch than the home pacemen.

What should have been a straightforward day's cricket for England threatened to become an all-too familiar embarrassment as they were reduced to 44 for four.

Only Mike Atherton's 30 held up the Zimbabwe advance. He batted at number seven, not allowed to open after spending over two hours off the field on Sunday.

He could only watch as England, 60 for four at lunch, lost further wickets in the afternoon.

Fellow Lancastrian Andrew Flintoff hit 'Pommes' Mbangwa for a magnificent straight six. But on 16, after being repeatedly beaten outside his off-stump by Heath Streak he edged to give Andy Flower one of five catches — a turnaround from the wicket-keeper's poor display at Lord's.

This brought Atherton to the crease and with his second run he became the first man to score 1,000 Test runs at Trent Bridge.

Not for the first time Graeme Hick looked unsettled in a pressure situation. Having received a peach of a delivery the ball before from Neil Johnson, Hick, on 30, then needlessly chased a wide one to give captain Flower another routine catch.

Even leg-spinner Brian Murphy got in on the act, inducing an edge from opposite number Chris Schofield that Alistair Campbell took at slip to leave England 110 for seven.

Fortunately for England, Atherton showed just enough

See page 14



England's Michael Atherton plays a sweep shot on the fifth and final day of the second Test against Zimbabwe at Trent Bridge on June 5.
—AFP photo

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