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3rd SAFF tourney in Dhaka

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) has asked the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) to host the 3rd SAFF Championship 2001 between October 25 to November 15.

This was disclosed by SAFF general secretary and an assistant general secretary of BFF Sirajul Islam Bachchu while briefing the local reporters at a press conference on the recent meeting of the regional football association held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, last week.

Two newly elected vice-presidents of BFF—Dr. Shamimuzaman Basma and Abdur Rahim—were also present at the briefing.

Speaking to the newsmen at the Bangladesh National Stadium, Bachchu revealed that except for Pakistan, all the other six member countries of the SAFF—India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka—had rep-

resentatives at the meeting and agreed to take part in the championship.

General secretary of Asian Football Confederation Peter Valappan and representatives of Asian Marketing Limited, the sponsors of the SAFF Championship, were also present at the meeting.

This is for the first time, Bhutan will be sending their national side to the competition.

According to Bachchu, Pakistan have also given their verbal consent to participate in the 3rd SAFF Championship. The previous two editions were held in Kathmandu, Nepal and Goa, India in 1997 and 1999 respectively.

It may be mentioned that tournament was originally scheduled last year. But due to the reluctance of the AML, who were more busy with the Asian Cup in Lebanon, the meet was not held in the proposed time.

AML will pay USD 500,000 (five lakh) to SAFF for organising the event from which the BFF will get

USD 200,000 (two lakh) as the hosts while six other participating nations will receive USD 25,000 each for their preparations and travel expenses.

SAFF will get USD 60,000 for other expenditures while the rest, USD 90,000 is allocated as prize money. The champions will earn USD 50,000, runners up USD 25,000 while the third placed team USD 15,000.

Bachchu said that this tournament was going to become the biggest footballing event in the subcontinent as only the under-23 teams of the member countries would take part in the SAFF Games from this year.

When asked where the championship would be held since Bangladesh National Stadium would be busy with cricket during October and November, Bachchu avoided the question saying it was the responsibility of BFF to decide where they would stage the meet adding that he was only representing SAFF in the briefing.

Condolence book for The Don at Australian HC

SPORTS REPORTER

A condolence book will remain open today at the Australian High Commission for the public to pay their respect to Sir Donald Bradman.

According to an Australian High Commission press release yesterday, cricket lovers can go to the High Commission office (184, Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan 2, Dhaka-1212) and put their signature in the condolence book from 9 am to 3 p.m.

Ranatungas in a pickle

APP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's former skipper Arjuna Ranatunga and his family were enraged and then engaged in a brawl with school boys who played their cricket ball into Ranatunga's family home, police said Sunday.

Four students from Asoka College were hospitalised after being beaten by Ranatunga, his brothers and security guards at their home, school teacher Lalith Amarasekara said.

Ranatunga, who led Sri Lanka to victory in the 1996 World Cup, was not immediately available for comment, but the state-run Sunday Observer said local police had to intervene to free students held by Ranatunga's guards.

The clash had erupted when the students played their ball into the neighbouring house of the Ranatungas. The former skipper's father is a minister in the Sri Lankan cabinet.

Another report from Nairobi said, Ranatunga helped unite Kenya's squabbling cricket fraternity Sunday in a charity match for victims of January's devastating Indian earthquake.

Ranatunga, who retired from international cricket five months ago, showed some flashes of his old form when he hit a century for his side.

Kenya's old and current players had formed two teams for the match. Money raised will go to victims of the earthquake, which rocked the western Indian state of Gujarat in January.

Ranatunga, who played as a special guest in the charity match organised by Kenya's former captain Asif Karim had partnered Steve Tikolo in the opening order.

The match attracted members of the national team, including the 11 players who were sacked by the Kenya Cricket Association for alleged indiscipline in February.

It was the first time that the team had assembled together since the sacking on February 7.

Ranatunga, who still turns out for his Sinhalese club, the team he has played for since he was 14, said he was happy to see the Kenyan players back in action.

"It's very important for the administrators and the players to get together and sort the problems they have. Ultimately the country comes first and the individuals are secondary", he said.

"They have to come to a joint agreement and sort out the problems affecting cricket and try and promote a lot of black people. I am happy to see many of them have already started taking interest," said Ranatunga, who led Sri Lanka's world cup-winning team to Kenya for a four-nation tournament in 1996.

WICB announces award for pitch

AP, Bridgetown

Following complaints of bad pitch conditions regionally, the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) said it will award cash for the best pitches during the upcoming Test cricket series between South Africa and the West Indies.

A combined amount around Barbadian 16,000 dollars (8,000 US) will be given to Caribbean grounds staff that produces the best pitches, Gregory Shillingford, the board's chief executive officer, said earlier this week.

There is a grounds staff of about 15 people at each pitch. Shillingford did not say how the best pitch would be judged.

The judging of the local pitches will begin during the first Test match in Guyana on March 9. The pitches in Antigua, Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad - sites of the other Test matches - will also be judged.

Caribbean cricket fans and cricket officials recently have been grumbling about the quality of pitches in the region, saying that grounds men roll the pitches too flat and the cricket balls cannot bounce.

Mobasser remains tight-lipped Directors hail election

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The Election Commission of the National Sports Council announced Sunday the official result of the much-talked-about February 25 polls of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

The name of Mobasser Hossain is also on the list of 16 directors elected from Dhaka clubs along with the 13 others from district, division, education and services quota.

But despite the official gazette, which suggested no wrongdoing had taken place in the election of the most affluent federation of the country, a pall of gloom hung over the stadium arena.

Mobasser tendered his resignation from the Board of Directors four days after he was elected. Allegations of bribery and other irregularities involving the polls reportedly prompted the Brothers Union councillor to step down.

Controversy marred the BCB election when a few candidates alleged that the Jafar Imam-led District and Division Forum manipulated the election with its "vote for cash" campaign. A show-off of arms and political interventions caught cricket connoisseurs off guard during the election.

Although most of the allegations were widely published in the different dailies and the NSC formed a three-member committee to probe the allegations, the Election Commission saw no legal binding in announcing the official

result. Some candidates went on record by alleging irregularities in the polls, but, surprisingly though, none of them lodged an official protest with the Election Commission.

Mobasser was however the only exception who apparently protested the whole electoral process in a different way. He however remained silent after sending his resignation letter to BCB president Saber Hossain Chowdhury on March 1.

His silence and the non-availability of Saber, who is now in Saudi Arabia to perform Hajj, triggered a mixed reaction among the cross-section of cricket lovers.

The Daily Star Sport however managed to have a brief encounter with Mobasser at his business office in Mirpur last evening. But he refused to say a thing until the Saber's responds to what he termed as a 'strictly confidential letter.'

"I'm really shocked at the way it reached to the press. I can only tell you that I have sent a letter to the board president and it is waiting for his response," said Mobasser.

"You must follow a principle wherever you work. It is my obligation to respect the board president. But the BCB office seemed to have acted very casual at such a serious matter," lamented Mobasser.

Although Mobasser remained tight-lipped, a close aid of the sports organiser said that his resignation had been influenced by the reports of bribery in the polls.

"It was the only way for him (Mobasser) to prove that he was not involved in the ugly race for

winning votes in exchange of money."

Meanwhile, fourteen out of the 16 elected directors from Dhaka clubs in a joint statement Sunday hailed the Election Commission for holding a 'free and fair' election.

But they were critical about the role of the fourth estate.

"Different newspapers have been publishing misleading reports regarding the recently concluded election of the Bangladesh Cricket Board," read the statement.

Mobasser apart, Syed Ashraf Huq, who is now in Saudi Arabia to perform Hajj, is the other director who did not sign the statement.

Following is the official list of 29 Board of Directors:

Form Dhaka: Mahmud Ul Huq, Gazi Golam Dastagir, Syed Ashraf Huq, Aziz Al Kaiser, Jalal Younus, Afzalur Rahman Sinha, Enayet Kabir Chanchal, Ali Khair Chand, Ahmed Sajjadul Alam, Enayet Hossain Siraj, Alam Chowdhury, Mahabubul Alam, GS Hassan Tamim, Tanjib Ahsan Saad, Mobasser Hossain and Tanvir Mazhar Islam Tanna.

From District and Division (elected unopposed): Mortaza Rashidi Dara, Selim Abedin, Rezaul Huq, Mahmud Jamal, Dewan Shafiqul Arefin Tutul, Sheikh Nizamuddin, Ehtesamul Alam, Dr. Mahfuzur Rahman, Abdul Gafur, Iftekher Hossain, Saïlab Hossain and Mamunur Rashid.

Form Education of Services (elected unopposed): Dr. Nizamuddin Ahmed.



Did U Know?

The torch relay began in the Ancient Olympics and was revived at the 1936 Berlin Games. Originally, the torch was lit at Olympia in Greece and then carried by relay to the host-city of the Games. The last runner carries the torch into the Olympic Stadium during the opening ceremony. The flame is then lit from the torch and will remain lit until it is extinguished during the closing ceremony. The torch relay symbolises the passing of Olympic traditions from one generation to the next!



What to WATCH

- ESPN**
- Boca Juniors vs River Plate
 - Argentine Football
 - 9:30 am
 - Western Union World Football
 - 11:30 am
 - UEFA Champs' League
 - Weekly Highlights
 - 2:00 pm
 - San Lorenzo vs Atletico Independiente
 - Argentine Football
 - 5:00 pm
 - Serie A Highlights
 - 7:30 pm
 - Aston Villa vs Sunderland
 - English Premiership
 - Live at 2:00 am (Tuesday)
- STAR SPORTS**
- Sheffield Shield Final
 - 2:00 pm
 - Harsha Online
 - Cricket Talk Show
 - 11:00 pm
 - Malaga vs Villarreal
 - Primera Liga
 - Repeat at 8:30 am



TALK TURKEY



Sir Richard Hadlee
 (New Zealand Cricket's chief selector)

"We believe he is the best man for the job."

While reaffirming support for embattled captain Stephen Fleming before the series against Pakistan.



Allan Donald

has taken 311 wickets, more than any other South African. But he has been sidelined by injuries in the past two years.

"I think I owe it to a lot of people back home and to prove a few people wrong," he said.

The South African team arrived here Thursday night. They start their tour with a three-day match against the Buxta Eleven, a regional composite team, in Georgetown, Guyana, on Sunday.

The first Test starts at Bourda, in Georgetown, on Friday. In all, five Test matches will be played.

Donald is the only surviving player from the first South African team to tour the West Indies in 1992. The West Indies won the only Test by 52 runs on a dramatic last day when the last eight South African wickets tumbled for 26.

"It does bring back memories,"

SEE PAGE 15



Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil speaking to reporters at a press conference organised in connection with the forthcoming Prime Minister's Gold Cup Hockey Tournament at a city hotel on Sunday.

All set for PM Gold Cup

Hockey

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka is fully prepared to host the first Prime Minister Gold Cup hockey tournament, scheduled for a March 10 start at the Moulana Bhasani Stadium.

Commerce Minister and chairman of the organising committee Abdul Jalil made this declaration at a press conference at a city hotel yesterday afternoon.

Chaired by Bangladesh Hockey Federation (BHF) president and Chief of Staff Bangladesh Air Force, Air Vice Marshall Jamaluddin Ahmed the press briefing was

also attended by co-chairman of the organising committee and State Minister for Shipping Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Whip of Jatiya Sangsad Mizanur Rahman Manu, Information Secretary MI Chowdhury, Sports Secretary Maniklal Somaddar and BHF general secretary Shamsul Bari.

The Commerce Minister thanked the local media for giving extensive coverage on the nine-nation tournament, the biggest international event in the country after the Asia Cup which was held way back in 1985.

Asian super powers India, Pakistan, hosts Bangladesh and Malaysia, Japan, Scotland, Ireland, Egypt, China will feature in the meet.

He said that this was for the first time, an international tournament was going to be held with the name of the Prime Minister.

Jalil also revealed that around Taka 1.75 crore would be spent for the smooth arrangement of the tournament and they have received assurance from prospective sponsors.

BHF general secretary Shamsul Bari termed 2001 as an important year for Bangladesh hockey as the national team, for the first time, has been exempted from the World Cup pre-qualifiers.

Bangladesh have earned a direct entry in the qualifying round in Scotland in July.

Besides, Bangladesh are also scheduled to take part in the Afro-Asian Cup which will be held in New Delhi, India, this year from November 3 to 11.

Bari said that it was a unique opportunity for Bangladesh team to have a good warm up before going for the World Cup qualifiers.

About Bangladesh's prospect in the PM Cup, Bari gave his guarded optimism.

"We will try for a semifinal berth. Let's hope for the best."

He also revealed that, two insurance companies—Jiban Bima and Sadharan Bima—have granted Taka 20 lakh each for the tournament. Unique Group will sponsor the electronic scoreboard at the expense of Taka 10 lakh.

Bari also announced Bangladesh Biman and Partex Group as the official carrier and soft drink sponsors of the tourney respectively.

BHF has already announced an 18-member Bangladesh team led by goalkeeper Russell Khan Bappy for the competition. Bangladesh have been drafted in Group A along with India, Japan, and Scotland while the other group comprises of Pakistan, Malaysia, Ireland, China and Egypt.

FIXTURES		
Date	Match	Kick-off time
Mar 10:	Bangladesh v Japan	3:30 p.m.
Mar 11:	China v Pakistan	10 am
	India v Scotland	2 p.m.
	Egypt v Malaysia	4 p.m.
Mar 12:	China v Ireland	2 p.m.
	Bangladesh v Scotland	4 p.m.
Mar 13:	India v Japan	12 Noon
	Ireland v Malaysia	2 p.m.
	Egypt v Pakistan	4 p.m.
Mar 14:	Bangladesh v India	4 p.m.
Mar 15:	China v Malaysia	12 Noon
	Japan v Scotland	2 p.m.
	Ireland v Pakistan	4 p.m.
Mar 16:	Egypt v Ireland	2 p.m.
	Malaysia v Pakistan	4 p.m.
Mar 18:	1st Semifinal (A1 v B2)	1:30 p.m.
	2nd Semifinal (A2 v B1)	4 p.m.
Mar 20:	Final	3:30 p.m.

Note: BTV will telecast all the matches live.

Pakistan in peril

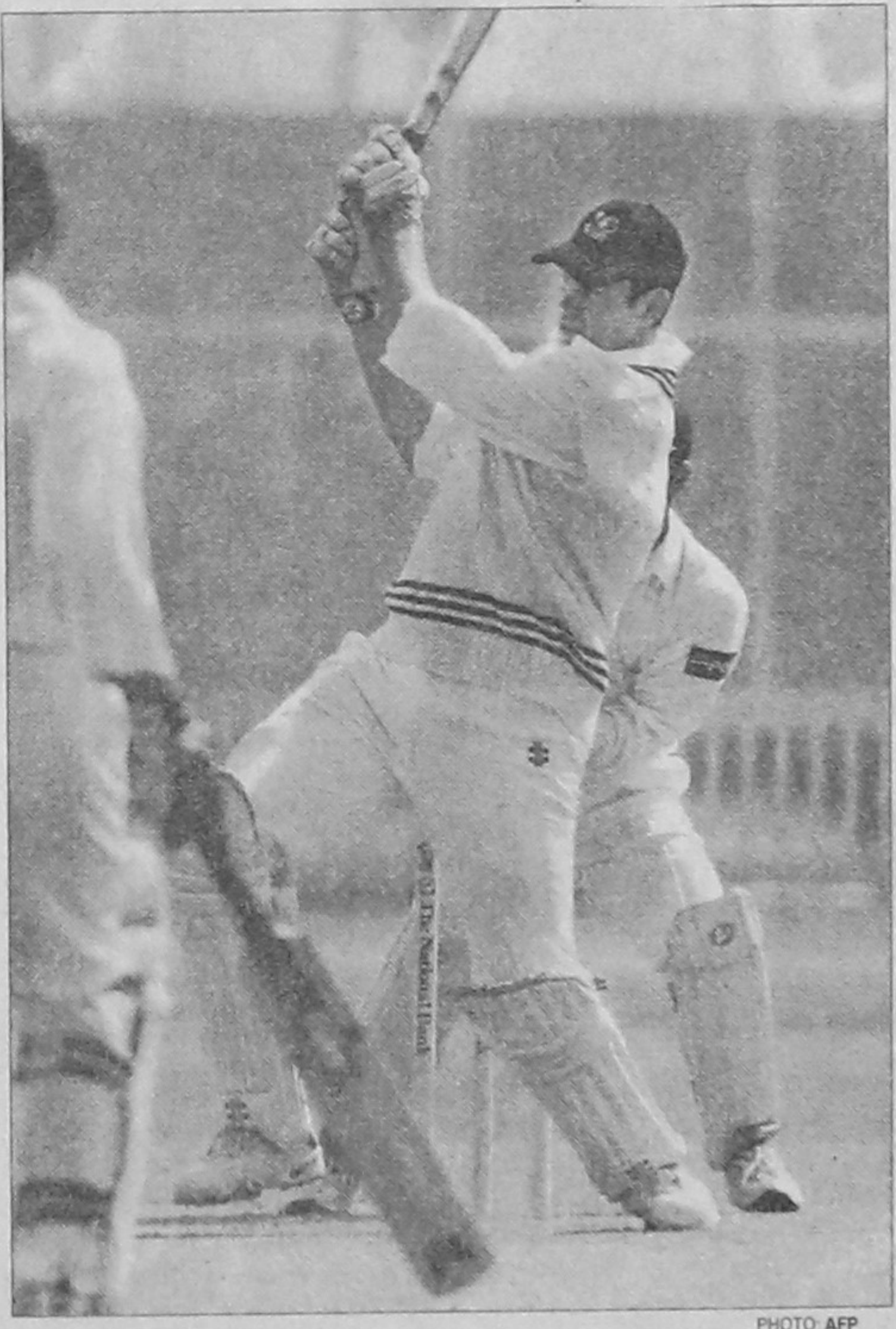
Cricket

REUTERS, Lincoln

Pakistan were battling to save their tour match against New Zealand A on Sunday after two late wickets by Kiwi Test hopeful Chris Drum left the visitors at 108 for four at

stumps on the second day at Lincoln.

Pakistan, dismissed for 100 in their first innings, are still 70 runs behind New Zealand A's first innings total of 278 with two days to play. The not out batsmen were Younis Khan on three and Saqlain Mushtaq on one.



New Zealand A batsman Jacob Oram follows through on a pull shot on the second day of the four-day match against Pakistan on Sunday.

Srinath cleared to play Gilchrist injured

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

Australia's first Test hero Adam Gilchrist suffered a hip strain on Sunday, forcing the tourists to summon wicket-keeper Brad Haddin from home as a stand-by.

Gilchrist, whose brilliant 122 off 112 balls helped Australia beat India by 10 wickets at Bombay and earned him the man-of-the-match award, strained his hip during a training session.

The Australian vice-captain was ruled out of the three-day match against the Indian Board President's team starting here on Tuesday, but confirmed he will be fit for next week's second Test in Calcutta.

"I've got a little bit of a hip

strain," Gilchrist said after the Australian team flew into Delhi from Bombay on Sunday.

"I'm resting as a precaution but I'll be okay for the second Test."

With Gilchrist the only specialist wicket-keeper on the tour, the Australians decided to fly in New South Wales' Haddin to play the three-day match.

Haddin, who made his international debut in the limited-overs tri-series against Zimbabwe and the West Indies in January, will miss the final day's play in a first-class match against Queensland in Sydney to reach Delhi in time for the tour game.

The beleaguered Indians, meanwhile, were boosted by the news that pace spearhead Jagal Srinath will play the Calcutta Test despite sustaining a fracture in his bowling hand at Bombay.

Imran Farhat scored his maiden half-century for Pakistan before falling to the leg-spin of Brooke Walker in the over before stumps.

Earlier, New Zealand A skipper Jacob Oram hit an impressive 88 as his side took a first innings lead of 178.

Drum, who has played for New Zealand in limited-overs matches without distinction, has now taken six wickets in the match and may have done enough to make the squad for the first Test as there is doubt over the fitness of Daryl Tuffey.

According to New Zealand coach David Trist, Tuffey has only a 50/50 chance of taking the field in the Auckland Test, starting on Thursday, as he is suffering from a hip injury.

Walker could also be called into the Test side to replace Daniel Vettori, who is suffering a recurrence of a back injury.

SCOREBOARD

Scorecards on the second day of the tour match between New Zealand A and Pakistan on Sunday:

PAKISTAN: First innings 100 (overnight 66-3)

Bowler	O	M	R	W
G Stead b Sami	23			
R Jones b Sami	11			
Gaffaney c Farhat b Waqar	8			
Vincent c Humayan b Saqlain	57			
Sulzberger lbw b Waqar	7			
Oram c sub b Arshad	88			
K Mills lbw b Saqlain	0			
Nevin b Saqlain	0			
Walker c Sami b Saqlain	23			
A Penn not out	19			
Drum b Mushtaq	0			
Extras: (lb-4, w-5, nb-11, b-12)	32			
Total: (all out)	278			

Fall of wickets: 1-16, 2-49, 3-62, 4-72, 5-178, 6-178, 7-180, 8-251, 9-266

NEW ZEALAND A: First innings

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Waqar	18	3	55	2
Sami	19	2	73	2
Mushtaq	20.5	2	61	1
Saqlain	13	4	45	4
Arshad	6	0	28	1

PAKISTAN: Second innings

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Farhat c Mills b Walker	51			
Elahi b Drum	20			
Humayan c Walker b Drum	10			
Youshan c Nevin b Penn	10			
Younis Khan not out	3			
Saqlain not out	1			
Extras: (lb-9, nb-4)	13			
Total (for 4 wks)	108			

Fall of wickets: 1-59, 2-75, 3-95, 4-107

Dubai title goes to Ferrero
 REUTERS, Dubai

Juan Carlos Ferrero won the 1-million-dollar Dubai Open ATP championship on Saturday when top seed Marat Safin was forced to retire with a back injury as he trailed 6-2, 3-1.