

Go for DELL COMPUTERS

from SYSCOM
Tel: 9124917, 8126204
Fax: 88-02-6122509
E-mail: syscom@bd-online.com



Naimur's men back home

SPORTS REPORTER

Naimur's Rahman's men arrived home Thursday morning after their one month overseas Test tour of Zimbabwe. This was Bangladesh's first trip since obtaining Test status in June last year.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Saber Hossain Chowdhury, family members of the 14 cricketers and other high officials of the Board, received the team at the Zia International Airport (ZIA).

The Test newcomers left Dhaka on April 1, to play three one-day internationals and a two-match Test series against Zimbabwe. They lost both series convincingly.

The players were jet lagged after their flight from Harare. They nevertheless stopped over at Dubai for a day.

The cricketers are scheduled to spend a week-off, but the physio of the team John Gloster would get little rest.

Gloster was scheduled to leave for London last night to join his English county side Surrey.

Coach Trevor Chappell said that he would stay in Dhaka for a few weeks before returning to Australia.

"I plan to remain here only for a few weeks. But that depends on the holding of the Second Asian Test Championship," said Chappell at the airport.

However, Saber Hossain said that the second edition would be held accordingly.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

WELCOME BACK: Star performers for Bangladesh in the Tests (L-R) Habibul Bashar, Monjurul Islam and Javed Omar Belim at the Zia International Airport upon their arrival from Zimbabwe on Thursday morning.

Wasim for longer series



INTERNET, Undated

Fast bowler Wasim Akram believes the Pakistan and England authorities have wasted a golden opportunity with their decision to hold a two Test series.

With England unexpectedly defeating Pakistan on their own patch last winter, interest in clashes between the two nations could not be higher.

The five-Test Ashes series is just around the corner and Akram feels his side have been reduced to being warm-up fodder before the Australians.

He said: "I don't know why we agreed to it or why the England and Wales Cricket Board offered it to us."

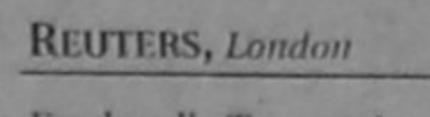
"Although England won in Pakistan, we won the last three series here and we have more supporters here than anybody else, so it would have been a full house for a five Test series."

"It is not an insult, but it won't be any fun. The first game, you are just getting into it, the second Test you are just picking up and then



WASIM AKRAM

A relishing prospect



REUTERS, London

England's Test series with Pakistan has always had the potential for fireworks.

This year's contest is no different.

Pakistan left Lahore for London on Wednesday in disarray, with a new captain, a new coach and an uneasy truce among some of their players — all set against the background of new, if unsubstantiated, match-fixing allegations.

But they unexpectedly left behind Shoaib Akhtar, the bowler who was cleared last month of throwing for the second time in his short but controversial career.

Shoaib has remodelled his action and had been expected to come under close scrutiny from umpires Darrell Hair and Peter Willey, the men who first reported him two years ago and who are due to officiate at the first Test at Lord's starting on May 17.

Pakistani officials said Shoaib had a stomach upset and hoped to join the team later in the two-month tour.

England and Pakistan know each other well.

Captain Waqar Younis and Saqlain Mushtaq have played with Alec Stewart and Graham Thorpe at Surrey, while Wasim Akram and Michael Atherton are Lancashire stalwarts.

Mushtaq Ahmed has an avid following at Somerset, where he has played with Andy Caddick and Marcus Trescothick.

Close personal ties, however, are not always enough to avoid a flashback.

After rows over umpiring during Pakistan's 1982 and 1987 tours, the touch-paper was truly set alight in the return series in Paki-

stan in late 1987.

The second Test in Faisalabad was dramatically halted after Mike Gatting and Shakoor Rana exchanged choice words and wagging fingers when the home umpire accused the England captain of trying to move a fielder behind the batsman's back.

A 24-hour hiatus followed before Gatting grudgingly offered the apology required for Rana to restart the game.

At least the two men did not threaten lawsuits, as occurred following Pakistan's 1992 tour of England.

With Waqar — whose relationship with Wasim will attract attention after he accused him of ruining his career two years ago — no longer the same force and Wasim nearing the end of his career, England captain Nasser Hussain might be tempted to consider his team as the favourites.

But Pakistan, packed with erratic and supremely skilful players, seem to thrive on dissension and uncertainty.

They managed just one victory in six during the 2000-01 season before former coach Javed Miandad was sacked and former captain Moin Khan ousted.

Police said they had a suspect in custody but it was not known whether he had been charged in connection with the death of Craig Edwards. It was the first death at a cricket match in Antigua, the Caribbean news agency CANA reported.

According to media reports, Edwards had been dancing in one of the recreation Ground's stands about one hour after the game ended when he became involved in an argument with another man.

New coach Richard Pybus was recruited just hours before the plane set off for England.

For any other team, the recent events would represent the worst possible preparation.

But Pakistan have so often proved the exception to the rule.

graph later apologised for calling the team the "pariahs of cricket."

Four years later, with the ball-tampering issue rumbling on, Lamb and Ian Botham ended up in the libel court opposite former Pakistan captain Imran Khan.

Lamb found himself on the losing side again when the jury threw out his and Botham's allegations that Imran had labelled them by calling them cheats and racists.

England, with four consecutive series successes, including one in Pakistan at the turn of the year, should feel more secure this time.

With Waqar — whose relationship with Wasim will attract attention after he accused him of ruining his career two years ago — no longer the same force and Wasim nearing the end of his career, England captain Nasser Hussain might be tempted to consider his team as the favourites.

But Pakistan, packed with erratic and supremely skilful players, seem to thrive on dissension and uncertainty.

They managed just one victory in six during the 2000-01 season before former coach Javed Miandad was sacked and former captain Moin Khan ousted.

Police said they had a suspect in custody but it was not known whether he had been charged in connection with the death of Craig Edwards. It was the first death at a cricket match in Antigua, the Caribbean news agency CANA reported.

According to media reports, Edwards had been dancing in one of the recreation Ground's stands about one hour after the game ended when he became involved in an argument with another man.

New coach Richard Pybus was recruited just hours before the plane set off for England.

For any other team, the recent events would represent the worst possible preparation.

But Pakistan have so often proved the exception to the rule.

Clash of titans tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

The title-deciding match of the Premier Division Cricket League between holders Abahani and leaders Mohammadan Sporting Club, will be held tomorrow instead of today.

Heavy rain over the last two days has made the pitch at the Bangabandhu National Stadium unplayable.

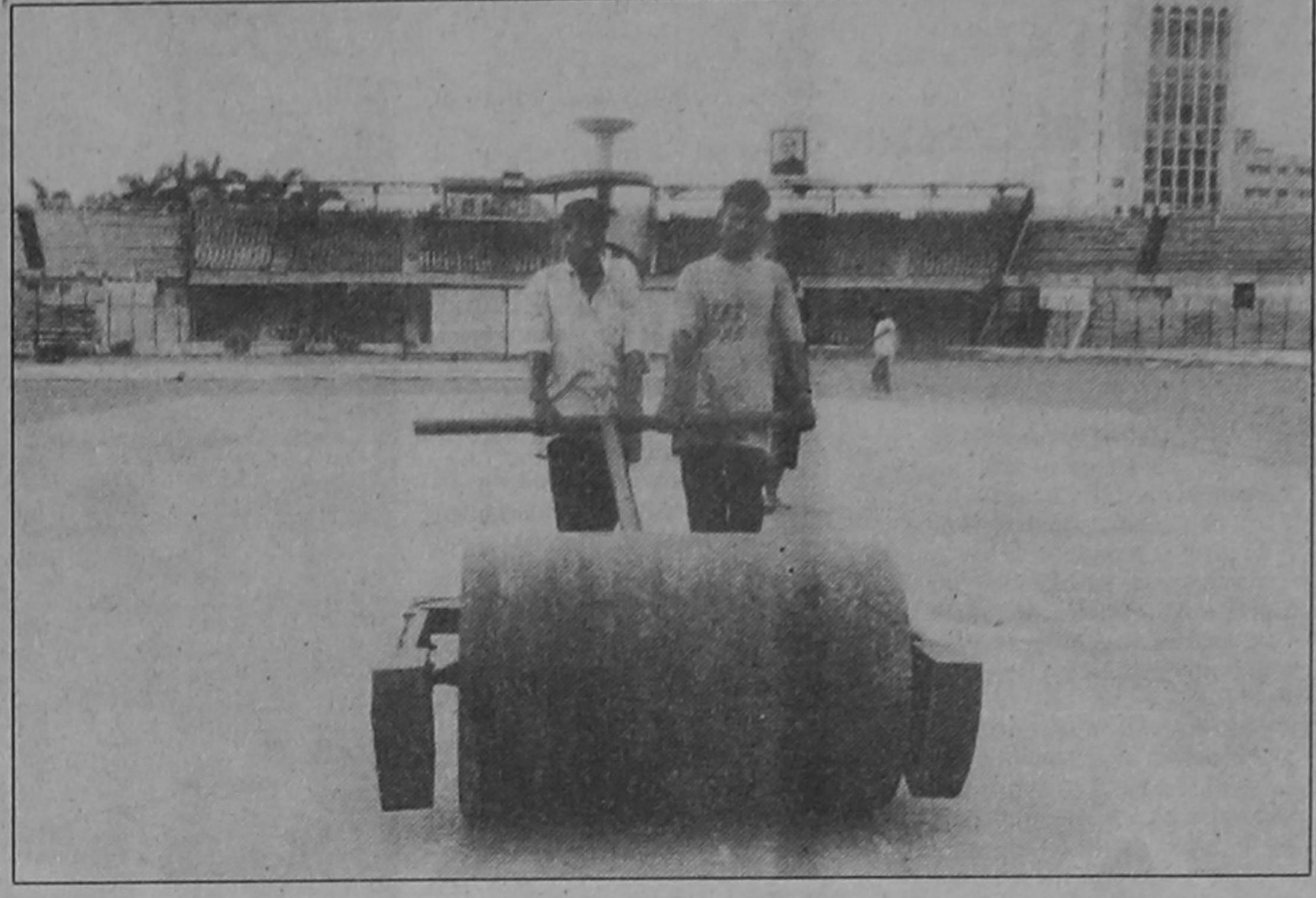
Meanwhile, Pakistani teenage off-spinner Shoaib Malik flew into Dhaka to play in Abahani's last match of the season. Malik's action has been reported to the International Cricket Council (ICC) following the Sharjah tournament last month.

He is expected to replace compatriot Tareq Javed.

Mohammedan have 26 points from 15 matches. Their arch-foes Abahani trail by two points from the same number of outings. However the latter enjoys a better run-rate (+1.27) compared to the Motijheel outfit's +1.21. So, a Mohammedan win will ensure them the prestigious title after missing out on three attempts. But if Abahani is victorious then run rates will determine the championship.

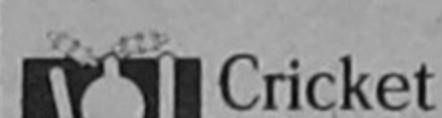
Rain also affected Thursday's Super and Relegation League fixtures.

Kalabagan Krira Chakra were to meet Surjo Tarun at the Bangabandhu National Stadium in the Super League And Victoria Sporting Club's Relegation game with Brothers Union at the Dhamondi Cricket Stadium was washed out.



Workers rolling the Bangabandhu Stadium pitch yesterday after the day's Premier Division Cricket Super League match was called off due to heavy overnight rain.

Gibbs guides South Africa



AFP, St John's

Herschelle Gibbs and Jacques Kallis shared a record second wicket partnership of 179 as South Africa cruised to an eight-wicket victory over the West Indies in the second one-day international at the Antigua Recreation Ground Wednesday.

South Africa's win levelled the seven-match series at 1-1.

Gibbs hit his fourth one-day international century, finishing with 104, while Kallis made an unbeaten 78.



PHOTO: INTERNET
Man-of-the-match Herschelle Gibbs raises his bat after scoring his century in the second one-day against West Indies on Wednesday.

Questioning over



REUTERS, Colombo

Investigators probing match-fixing in cricket have finished questioning former Sri Lankan captain Arjuna Ranatunga and leading Test batsman Aravinda de Silva.

"The process is over now. The questioning went all right," said lawyer Desmond Fernando on Thursday. "I questioned them myself and the International Cricket Council (ICC) also had one or two questions."

Fernando was appointed by



ARJUNA RANATUNGA

the Sri Lankan cricket board last November to examine allegations in an Indian police report that the two players had taken bribes from bookmakers to throw matches.

Fernando added that several questions had been given to him by the New Zealand cricket board.

Two officials from the ICC's Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) were present for the questioning.

Ranatunga, who led Sri Lanka to their 1996 World Cup triumph, and de Silva, the country's most prolific Test batsmen, were among several international players named in the Indian police report.

ACU chief Sir Paul Condon, a former head of London's Metropolitan Police, told a news conference last week in Sri Lanka that he was satisfied with the way Sri Lanka was probing the charges, which have been denied by both players.

"I will never have any part in a cover-up, nothing and no one will be too sacred," he said when asked about reports in the local media criticising the Sri Lankan investigation.

Since the scandal last year, three former Test captains — South African Hansie Cronje, India's Mohammad Azharuddin and Pakistan's Salim Malik — have been banned for life.

Meanwhile, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said that it had invited ICC investigators to visit Pakistan at the end of

Dell OptiPlex

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR MONEY

SYSKOM
Tel: 9124917, 8126204
Fax: 88-02-6122509
E-mail: syscom@bd-online.com

PHOTO: STAR

small ground with a good batting pitch. Gibbs hit three sixes and eight fours in his 141-ball innings, while Kallis hit two sixes and five fours off 112 balls. Both men hit sixes which cleared the stands and sailed into the streets surrounding the grounds.

Stung by their last-ball, three-wicket defeat in the first international in Kingston, Jamaica, Saturday, South Africa produced a top-class display of bowling and fielding after Shaun Pollock sent the West Indies in to bat.

West Indian opener Chris Gayle hit some crunching boundaries early on as he made 50 off 72 balls but lost momentum when fielding restrictions were lifted at the end of 15 overs.

Recalled Shivnarine Chanderpaul made a successful return to one-day international cricket as he and skipper Carl Hooper lifted a flagging scoring rate, putting on 86 for the fourth wicket in just 13 overs.

Chanderpaul hit 60 off 54 balls in his first one-day international in more than a year during which he has been plagued by injury. Chanderpaul's dismissal, when he was run out after a misunderstanding with Hooper, started a West Indian collapse in which five wickets fell while only 30 runs were scored off the last 39 balls of the innings.

Hooper made 48 off 46 balls and was part of the collapse, slicing a slower ball from Pollock to cover after surviving a simple chance to Kirsten at mid-on off Roger Telemachus five runs earlier.

Gibbs said he was pleased to have gone on to make a century after being dismissed three times in the eighties during the recent five-match Test series. He gave a chance on 76 when he cut off spinner Marlon Samuels to wicket-keeper Ridley Jacobs.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard from second one-day international between the West Indies and South Africa at the

SEE PAGE 15



ARAVINDA DE SILVA