

India-SL Test venues fixed

REUTERS, New Delhi

India's three-Test series in Sri Lanka this August will be played at the southern fort town of Galle, Kandy and Colombo, an Indian cricket board official said on Wednesday.

India, who begin a 50-day tour of Sri Lanka on July 15, will take part in a triangular one-day series also involving New Zealand ahead of the Tests.

REVISED ITINERARY

July 15: Arrival in Colombo
July 18: Sri Lanka v New Zealand — Colombo
July 20: India v New Zealand — Colombo
July 22: Sri Lanka v India — Colombo
July 25: Sri Lanka v New Zealand — Dambulla
July 26: Sri Lanka v India — Dambulla
July 27: India v New Zealand — Dambulla
July 30: New Zealand v Sri Lanka — Colombo
July 31: New Zealand v India — Colombo
Aug 2: India v Sri Lanka — Colombo
Aug 4: Tri-series final — Colombo
Aug 8-10: Three-day match — Matara
Aug 14-18: First Test — Galle
Aug 22-26: Second Test — Kandy
Aug 29-Sept 2: Third Test — Colombo
Sept 3: Departure from Colombo

Afghan cricket team arrives in Pakistan

AFP, Peshawar

The first-ever Afghan cricket team arrived here Tuesday on a week-long tour and said the visit was aimed at taking gradual steps into international cricket.

"We are here on a tour of goodwill and aim to take gradual steps in international cricket," team captain Allahdad Noori said.

All 17 members of the novice team are bearded and will play their matches in trousers, which they are not allowed to do at home, cricket officials said.

The hardline Taliban militia which rules most of the Afghanistan has barred Afghans from wearing trousers in line with its puritanical interpretation of Islamic Sharia law.

"We want to tell the world that Afghans can also play sports," Noori said.

War-battered Afghanistan is isolated in the world and is under the United Nations sanctions for its refusal to hand over indicted terrorist Osama bin Laden.

The millionaire Saudi dissident is wanted by United States over the 1998 twin bombing of its embassies in East Africa.

Noori said the Taliban was not against sports.

"Islam remains the first priority but ever since Taliban have taken control, cricket has become popular in Afghanistan," he said.

A Pakistan club football team was treated shabbily by Taliban when it visited the militia's headquarters in the southern Afghan city of Kandahar last year.

Players were arrested for playing in shorts and their heads were shaved.

The Afghanistan team, invited here by the Pakistan Cricket Board, will play two matches each in Peshawar and Rawalpindi.

The first match will be against the Peshawar under-19 on Thursday.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) last year donated cricket kits to Afghanistan when the ICC development manager for Asia, Nasimul Ghani, visited Kabul.

Russian schoolboy makes Wisden

AP, London

After 138 years, cricket's bible Wisden has added a Russian to its books.

Alexei Korobkin, a 17-year-old schoolboy from St Petersburg, earned a mention by taking figures of six for 24 for Dover College in a match against the XI Club. Both clubs are in Kent.

His achievement was more remarkable given it was just his second season.

Korobkin was mentioned in the Wisden almanac as one of the most outstanding schoolboys of the year. He was Dover's leading bowler for the 2000 season, taking 13 wickets in 59 overs.

Korobkin said he wanted to take cricket to Russia when he finished school. He named England fast bowler Darren Gough as his hero.

"It's a remarkable achievement because Alexei never had the opportunity to play cricket at home in Russia," said Wisden managing editor Hugh Chevallier. "He has done very well."

Dover College headmaster Howard Blackett said the school was very proud of Korobkin.

Al Temyat Asia's best

Troussier first foreign Coach of the Year

Football

REUTERS, Singapore



PHILIPPE TROUSSIER

Saudi Arabian midfielder Nawaf Al Temyat has been named Asian Player of the Year for 2000, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) announced at a ceremony on Wednesday.

Al Temyat, who plays for Asian Club and Asian Super Cup champion Al Hilal, was chosen ahead of Japanese players Hiroshi Nanami and Ryuzo Morioka and South Korea's Lee Dong-gook.

"In the name of God the most gracious, the most merciful, I thank God for my success," said Al Temyat via a video link from Paris, where he is recovering after surgery to repair a damaged knee ligament.

"I thank the AFC and all those who nominated me for this award, which I consider the most important of my career."

"I dedicate this award to Saudi Arabia, my father, God, rest his soul, and my mother, may God preserve her."

"I also dedicate this award to all who have helped me in my sporting career, including administrators, coaching staff and players."

He also helped his country reach the Asian Cup final in Japan last October.

The knee injury he picked up in April is likely to rule him out of action until the end of the year.

Al-Hilal won the Team of the Year award.

Meanwhile, Japan national team coach Philippe Troussier was named Coach of the Year, the first non-Asian to receive the award.

The Frenchman led Japan to their Asian Cup triumph in Lebanon last October, and to the quarter-finals of the Olympic Games in Sydney.

"It's a great honour to receive this award from the AFC," said Troussier. "This represents great recognition for me and I consider it an invitation to join a small circle of people within the Asian football family."

"This award represents the results of the national team of Japan and I have to share this honour with my players, my staff and all of the coaches in Japan, as well as the supporters and those who have backed me."

Troussier, who succeeded Takeshi Okada as Japan coach in 1998, won the award ahead of Thailand's English coach Peter Withe, Saudi Arabia's Nassir Al Johar and Iraq's Adnan Hamad.

Japan also won the National Team of the Year, while Ryoichi Maeda was named Asian Youth Player of the Year.

Lamb defends Pak itinerary

INTERNET, London

England cricket official Tim Lamb has denied the forthcoming two-Test series with Pakistan is a bad reflection on the tourists.

The Chief Executive of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has hit back at media comment regarding the length of Pakistan's current tour.

"It is completely wrong to suggest that the ECB's decision to host two Test Matches against Pakistan this summer reflects poorly on the tourists," said Lamb.

"Our original plan for this summer was to play a six Test Ashes series against Australia only."

"However, following our new broadcasting deal with Channel Four and Sky in 1998, we agreed to expand the international match programme to seven Test matches per summer and introduce a triangular one-day tournament, The NatWest Series."

"This enabled us to extend an invitation to another international side and the Pakistan Cricket Board readily accepted our offer to play two Tests this summer and take part in the NatWest Series."

"It would not have made cricketing or commercial sense for us to play a seven-Test series against one country and we firmly believe that the current international match programme is in tune with what cricket fans want."

"It should also be stressed that Pakistan's tour this year was originally intended to be an additional tour over and above the visit Pakistan were due to make here in 2004 under the previous touring programme."

This has now been overtaken by the new ICC Test Cricket World Championship whereby each country has to play each other twice home and away during a five-year period and, as a consequence, Pakistan will now not tour here in 2004.

"I can reassure Pakistan supporters that the ECB has the utmost respect for their team's ability. They are one of the most exciting sides to watch in world cricket and we will be looking to play a minimum of three Test matches and possibly four when Pakistan are next due to tour here again in 2006."

Hingis rolls on

AFP, Berlin

Top-seeded Swiss Martina Hingis said Tuesday she is now her own woman after arriving in Berlin minus her mother and former coach Melanie Molitor and swiftly despatching Tatiana Garbin of Italy 6-2, 6-3 to reach the third round of the 1.2 million-dollar German Open.

Hingis arrived in Germany with hitting partner David Taylor after dispensing with her mother's services for the second time in less than two years but didn't allow the issue to bother her as she swept through her match in just 52-min despite a rather lacklustre showing.

The first 'break with mum' came after Hingis lost to Steffi Graf in the 1999 Roland Garros final, whereupon she memorably threw a tantrum and then crashed out of Wimbledon in the opening round, humbled in straight sets by Jelena Dokic.

But Hingis maintains this latest move to flee the nest is all part of growing up and taking responsibility for her own life.

While Tuesday's performance was not one to have main rival Venus Williams quaking in her boots it was a sufficiently comfortable afternoon's work by Hingis, who won this tournament two years ago.

Despite tournament wins in Sydney, Doha and Dubai, 2001 has not been a good Hingis vintage with Jennifer Capriati ousting her in the Australian Open final and again in the final at Charleston.

Her North American season brought additional defeats by Kim Clijsters, Venus Williams and Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario to leave the 20-year-old with plenty to ponder as she prepares to break her duck at Roland Garros in three weeks time.

On Tuesday, Garbin, ranked 56 in the world, was a suitable lamb for the slaughter as in her two previous encounters with Hingis - who is gunning for her 39th singles title - she had managed to win just two games in total.

Once again the 23-year-old Italian floundered in the face of Hingis' superior positional sense and all-round claycourt guile.

Steady

FROM PAGE 13

Farhat e Bassano b Dumelow 46
Iqbal not out 34
Younhan 4
Extras: (lb-2, w-2, nb-3) 7
Total: (For 2 wkt in 37 overs) 106

Fall of wickets: 1-28, 2-101

To bat: Inzamamul Haq, Rashid Latif, Waqar Younis, Shoaib Akhtar, Abdul Razzaq, Sajid Mushtaq, Azhar Mahmood

Bowler O M R W
Cork 9 2 18 0
Smith 10 3 23 1
Wharton 8 2 35 0
Lumley 8 1 22 0
Dumelow 2 1 6 1

PHOTO AFP



American Andre Agassi looks dejected as he leaves the court after being defeated by Spaniard Alex Calatrava in the first round of the Rome Masters Series in Rome on Tuesday.

The problem today was a lack

Aussies at work

Cricket

INTERNET, London

The Australians may not have arrived for the Ashes yet, but Surrey found their progress in Division One of the English County Championship barreled by a couple of early arrivals from down under.

Alex Tudor struck early against Northamptonshire at Wantage Road — removing Mal Loe — but that was to be the champions' only success of the opening session.

Michael Hussey, from Western Australia, and the Sydney-born Jeff Cook batted positively to take the home side to 127 for one at lunch, on the opening day Wednesday. Hussey was on 53 and Cook 50.

Muttiah Muralitharan took two wickets for Lancashire to check Leicestershire's good start at Grace



PHOTO INTERNET
Warwickshire's Melvyn Betts bowls Durham's Michael Gough during their County Championship match at Edgbaston on Wednesday.

Mission millionaire

Cricket

INTERNET, Melbourne

Australia will have its first millionaire cricketer under a new pay agreement announced on Wednesday.

The players would be ranked one to 25 by the selectors and the number one player would stand the best chance of topping the million-dollar mark.

Speed said the chairman of selectors Trevor Hohns would speak to the players next week about their rankings.

"I'm not going to guess who the first one-million-dollar player will be," Speed said.

"There's an additional allowance for captain and vice-captain. It's now a reasonably significant sum."

Speed said an ACB-contracted player could have earned a maximum of 625,000 dollars during the 2000-01 season but this was projected to rise to 1.162 million dollars in 2004-05.

But players who accept overseas contracts will be required to forego 12.5 per cent of their re-tainer.



PHOTO INTERNET
Bangladesh Cricket Board president Saber Hossain Chowdhury handing over the winners' trophy to Imtiaz, captain of Renegades who clinched the Partex-WECCA Weekend Cricket League title in the city recently.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	34	Make	51	Change	11	Highland
1 Lustrous		good as	for a five	gal		
4 Envelope	35	Senate	52	Say it isn't	19	Type of
8 MP's	36	staff	so	top	20	Voices vote
12 — was	37	Moon-	53	Spelling	21	"Alice"
saying,	38	shine	—	22	spinoff	
13 Adjective	39	Actor	23	Behaving	24	Ump
for a	40	Gulager	24	2 Birthright	25	Cloud
tabula	41	Autumnal	25	3 Coloration	26	Clinton's
14 Stromboli	42	Bank	26	4 Quaker	27	instrument
spillage	43	trans-	27	5 Bird	28	3 Journal
15 Beatnik's	44	action	28	6 Since	29	2 Sculpture
expletive	45	48 Bit of	29	7 Fear-	30	material
16 Unyielding	46	49 Send	30	8 Stricken	31	29" — Boor"
17 Currier's	47	forth	31	9 Gesture	32	31" — Jerked
partner	48	Caesar!"	32	10 Finishes	33	3