

## Rain again at work

### Sharif to be sidelined

**Cricket**

AP/ REUTERS, Wellington

New Zealand and Bangladesh faced disrupted preparations for their second cricket Test beginning in Wellington on Wednesday after rain damaged outdoor practice facilities.

The New Zealand team trained indoors Sunday and Monday because no practice pitches are available at the match venue, the Basin Reserve. The first Test, an innings win by New Zealand, saw the first two days rained out in Hamilton.

Ground staff in Wellington have been thwarted in their efforts to prepare the Test match pitch by constant rain over recent weeks. A marquee was erected over the pitch last week and industrial heaters and fans were used dry the strip which was dampened when rain leaked under the conventional covers.

No time could be spared to prepare practice pitches.

"Not being able to train outdoors in Wellington is not ideal," New Zealand coach Denis Aberhart said Monday.

"It makes it hard playing international cricket and being the best prepared we can. Hammering the indoor nets for two days isn't the greatest preparation."

Meanwhile, Bangladesh is likely to drop medium pacer Mohammad Sharif for the match. Although Sharif picked up three for 114 in New Zealand's innings, coach Trevor Chappell said on Monday he

was likely to be discarded.

Just who Bangladesh will promote is uncertain, although Chappell said it would not be left-arm spinner Enamul Hoque. The team is not expected to be announced until the morning of the Test.

Asked how he would lift the team following their heavy defeat in Hamilton, Chappell said it was not a difficult task.

"In terms of Bangladesh cricket



MOHAMMAD SHARIF

the result wasn't too bad," said the Australian. "In terms of international cricket, of course, it wasn't too hot."

"They don't seem to get down about a result like that, perhaps because they are used to them, and I don't know whether that's good or bad. It's not like Australia or New Zealand who would rant and rave and brood over a poor result," said Chappell.

"I suppose it's good at this stage. They are prepared to jump back in

the ring and get whacked in the head again."

The other factor of concern to the visitors is how they handle the wind if it blows in Wellington.

A wind in Wellington is much more difficult to handle than almost anywhere else in the world and it takes a special kind of bowler to spend much of the day working into it.

New Zealand have made two changes to their side.

Matthew Horne will come in for batsman Nathan Astle who has a hairline fracture on a knuckle and will be in plaster for the next 10 days.

Seamer Chris Drum also replaces Chris Martin after being 12th man in the first Test.

Coach Denis Aberhart said with the wind in Wellington being a notorious adversary, Drum had been picked to bowl into whatever breeze there was.

"He also deserved a chance after taking 10 wickets against Bangladesh in the tour game," Aberhart said.

Drum has played only one Test, the draw against Pakistan in Christchurch last March. He dislocated his shoulder after falling heavily while fielding on the third day and could not add to the one wicket he had already taken.

**NZ SQUAD**

Stephen Fleming (captain), Mark Richardson, Matthew Horne, Lou Vincent, Craig McMillan, Mathew Sinclair, Chris Cairns, Adam Parore, Daniel Vettori, Shane Bond, Chris Drum.

## Pepsi 14th Nat'l Women's H'ball from Dec 27

SPORTS REPORTER

The Zone Two competition of the Pepsi 14th National Women's Handball Competition will commence at Narail Stadium on December 27.

Seven teams are taking part in the preliminary phase. They are Khulna, Jessore, Kushtia, Magura, Meherpur, Satkhira and hosts Narail.

## Lanka bring in two rookies

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka have named two uncapped players in their 14-member squad for the first cricket Test against Zimbabwe starting here on Thursday.

Middle-order batsman Chamara Silva and seamer Prabhath Nissanka replace all-rounder Suresh Perera and opener Michael Vandort from the squad chosen for the last series against the West Indies.

Silva, who struck an unbeaten 127 in Sri Lanka's Board team's five-wicket win over the Zimbabweans on Sunday, and Nissanka have both played one-day internationals before.

Nissanka will compete with Charitha Buddhika for the third seamer's slot behind left-armers Chaminda Vaas and Nuwan Zoysa. Silva may, however, not make it to the playing eleven as the squad has six other batsmen.

Sri Lanka start favourites in the three-Test series, having blanked the West Indies 3-0 last month.

The hosts also beat the West Indies in the final of the triangular one-day series in which Zimbabwe was the third team.

The Colombo Test will be followed by matches at Kandy (January 4-8) and Galle (January 12-16).

**SQUAD**  
Sanath Jayasuriya (capt), Marvan Atapattu, Mahela Jayawardene, Russell Arnold, Kumar Sangakkara, Hashan Tillakaratne, Chamara Silva, Thilan Samaraweera, Muttiah Muralitharan, Chaminda Vaas, Nuwan Zoysa, Charitha Buddhika, Prabhath Nissanka, Niroshan Bandaraillake.

## Woolmer for ball handling law

REUTERS, London

Former South Africa coach and England all-rounder Bob Woolmer believes one of the game's laws has to be reworded to prevent a repeat of Michael Vaughan's bizarre dismissal in the Bangalore third Test.

Vaughan became only the seventh player in Test history to be given out handled the ball following a belated appeal by the India team during England's first innings of 336 in Bangalore.

But Woolmer, who now coaches English county Warwickshire, says the law should only come into force if the batsman "is preventing his dismissal", which he felt Vaughan was not doing in Bangalore.

"A batsman should be given out handled the ball if, in the opinion of the umpire, he is preventing his dismissal," Woolmer told Wisden.com.

Law 33 states that a batsman may not handle the ball without the consent of the fielding side.

As it stands, the law states that "either batsman is out handled the ball if he wilfully touches the ball while in play, with a hand or hands not holding the bat, unless he does so with the consent of the opposing side".

Vaughan was on 64 when he missed a sweep against off-spinner Sharandeep Singh on the opening day of the third Test and, as the ball dropped in front of his pad, he put his hand on it and tossed it towards short leg.

Singh appealed and the umpire had no option but to give Vaughan out.

While Vaughan was correctly given out according to the laws of the game, Woolmer would like to see law 33 amended to ensure that the game's spirit is not infringed.

In the two previous instances of batsmen being given out handled the ball in Test cricket, England's Graham Gooch (Manchester, 1993) and Australia's Steve Waugh (Madras, 2001) were both trying to protect their stumps.

But Woolmer insists Vaughan's dismissal was different.

"The Indian appeal was truly against the spirit of the game," he said.

## NSC asked to reinstate BFF body

**Football**

SPORTS REPORTER

The office-bearers of the just-dissolved executive committee of BFF (Bangladesh Football Federation) have claimed themselves as the lone legal body to rule the country's football and asked the National Sports Council (NSC) to create a conducive atmosphere for carrying out their duties.

This demand was made at a press conference at a city hotel yesterday. Among the disgruntled organisers, vice-president Nazrul Islam Khan Badal, general secretary Harunur Rashid, assistant general secretaries Badal Roy and Sirajul Islam Bachchu and some members were present there and spoke in their defence.

Empowered by its controversial Act 20 (a), NSC, the governing body of all games, on Thursday dissolved

the elected committee and formed an ad-hoc committee for a period of three months.

In a written statement, Harunur Rashid revealed that they have not yet received any official letter from the NSC that they have been ousted from the federation.

"So far we have not received any official confirmation. We are still the legal body of the BFF. This is absolutely undemocratic to form an ad-hoc committee ignoring us," said Harunur, adding that they have been elected under the Constitution of NSC and that it has got no right to remove them just after ten months in the office.

"We are asking the NSC to listen to us and reinstate the elected committee. That is our only demand for today," said Harunur, terming the introduction of ad-hocism as simply an act of going back to square one from a democratic atmosphere.

He also accused the NSC of ignoring a decision passed in its last general meeting in November 2000. He said that it was decided in that meeting that NSC would call for an AGM and take the advice of council members before applying the 'black' Act 20 (a).

Harunur also said that it was not necessary to dissolve the committee following the change in government. The NSC could have very well held a new election avoiding the application of NSC Act 20 (a).

Harunur also said that they have not decided yet about their future course of action as they are still hopeful that NSC would come to its senses and fulfil their legitimate demand.

In another query, Harunur said that many of the members of his committee have been appointed in different committees of FIFA, AFC and SAFF by name and they would continue to carry out their duties.

## '01: ICC comes into its own

**Cricket**

AFP, London

The International Cricket Council (ICC) finally stood up for itself in 2001.

The decision by India and South Africa to play the third Test without match referee Mike Denness, following his rulings against several Indian players including Sachin Tendulkar in the previous match left the ICC in a tight spot.

But it responded with unusual clarity by stripping the match of official Test status.

The ICC continued to stand by former England captain Denness, insisting batsman Virender Sehwag serve a one-match ban by missing the first Test against England earlier this month.

Despite fears that both the South Africa match and indeed England's entire tour of India might be called off, each went ahead for the same reason: television money.

Four England players -- Alec Stewart, Darren Gough, Andrew Caddick and Robert Croft chose not to tour, the last two citing security fears in the wake of September 11 as their reason while Graham Thorpe's marriage difficulties saw him pull out ahead of the second Test.

In the circumstances Nasser Hussain's inexperienced side performed creditably in losing a rain-affected series 1-0.

India had already shown that there was a way for otherwise invincible Australia to be defeated: it simply needed a once in a lifetime performance.

Venkatesh Luxman's extraordinary double century in the second Test helped India win after following on 274 behind.

Then in the final match off-spinner Harbhajan Singh took 15 wickets and hit the winning runs in a thrilling series-clinching victory.

Impregnable at home, India's

poor away form continued.

Things might have been different had not their government, citing the ongoing row over the disputed territory of Kashmir, stopped them from touring Pakistan.

England's brief home series against Pakistan, was the first in the new ICC World Test championship, a five-year cycle designed to harmonise the international calendar.

Unfortunately for Pakistan it meant they became a mere 'warm-up' act for the following Ashes series.

This might have been defensible had it not been for the knowledge that English administrators would never allow such a short campaign against Australia.

Pakistan off-spinner Saqlain Mushtaq engineered a batting collapse at Old Trafford that levelled the series.

England, buoyed by a come from behind series win in Sri Lanka, had looked in decent form but Saqlain's spell saw old doubts resurface.

It was no surprise then that Australia retained the Ashes by four Tests to one.

Only Mark Butcher's Test best 173 not out at Headingley denied Australia a clean sweep.

The Waugh twins said goodbye to English cricket with a century each in the final Test at The Oval where their team-mate Shane Warne became the first spinner to take 400 Test wickets.

No such joy for former England captain Michael Atherton, whose second innings nine was his final Test knock.

The best defensive batsman of his generation had finally been worn down by his dodgy back and the mental strain of playing in a weak side.

Meanwhile Zimbabwe's Hamilton Masakadza, 11 days short of his 18th birthday, became the youngest player in Test history to make a debut century with 119 in a thrilling series-clinching victory.

Impregnable at home, India's

But the tourists took the series 1-0 for their first overseas triumph since 1995.

Later, Zimbabwe were involved in a world record of an altogether different kind. In December their 38 all out against Sri Lanka was the lowest total in one-day international history.

Paceman Chaminda Vaas did the damage with one-day record figures of eight for 19 in a game that lasted just 20 overs.

Sri Lanka enjoyed Test success too, thrashing West Indies 3-0 despite Brian Lara's 688 runs at an average of 114.66.

By then fast bowler Courtney Walsh had retired with a world record 519 Test wickets to his name.

In his 39th year Walsh finished in style, bowling the West Indies to victory over South Africa on his home ground of Sabina Park, Jamaica.

But the Proteas won the series 2-1 in what was generally a good 12 months for Shaun Pollock's team.

New Zealand too made progress, almost winning a series in Australia but having to settle for three draws instead.

In the third Test debutant batsman Lou Vincent made a century while in the same innings three other New Zealand batsmen reached three figures.

It was the first time any side had made four hundreds in an innings against Australia since England in 1938.

Back then Don Bradman was in his pomp. But the Australia hero died in February aged 92, unusually just missing a hundred.

It was not the first time he had fallen short of three figures. In 1948 the most famous duck in cricket history left Bradman with a Test average of 99.94.

Sporting records usually fall to the passage of time but in a year of upheaval Bradman's mark remained as immovable as ever.

## Foster won't talk about it

REUTERS, London

England wicketkeeper James Foster refused on Monday to enter a debate on former captain Alec Stewart's decision to make himself available for a one-day series against India in the New Year.

The 21-year-old Foster, widely regarded as one of England's brightest prospects after the recent Test series in India, is backing his own talent to keep his place in the team.

Stewart, who initially declined to tour India after allegations there that he was involved in match-fixing, said last week he was prepared to be considered for the upcoming one-day series in India to be played in January and February.

But Foster told BBC radio: "I've got no idea about that. Obviously I'm just trying to do my job really and that's about it."

England captain Nasser Hussain has strongly hinted that Foster's place in the side is assured for the one-dayers, as originally planned.

"It's nice to hear that Alec has made himself available but the one-day squad has been selected," Hussain told Monday's Evening Standard newspaper.

## Rajshahi name team National League starts tomorrow

**Cricket**

SPORTS REPORTER

Rajshahi have finally sent their list of 23 Probables to the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) for the Ispahani Tea Third National Cricket League, which begins in Chittagong tomorrow.

The roster includes national Test captain Khaled Mashud, who is now in New Zealand to feature in the two-Test series.

Rajshahi are the fourth team to announce their squad. However the last date given by the BCB for submission of players names, expired twelve days ago.

The two other sides in the competition, Khulna and Sylhet, still haven't submitted their team lists.

The tournament committee secretary Ehtesamul Alam said that Khulna is expected to provide their list shortly. But he expressed his apprehension about the participation of Sylhet.

The only first class competition of the country will kick off at the MA Aziz Stadium with Chittagong hosting Dhaka.

Rajshahi will play their first match

against Chittagong at Comilla, starting on January 2.

But there is little enthusiasm among the organisers and sports scribes as well since most of the leading cricketers of the country are now on tour to New Zealand.

Meanwhile, six former national cricketers have been selected as match referees for the league to be played in six different venues.

They are ex-national captain Roquibul Hassan, Aliul Islam, Samiur Rahman, GM Nowsher Prince, Rafiqul Alam and Tanjib Ahsan.

For Prince, the former left-arm opening bowler, it will be his debut in officiating, while for Sami another acid test awaits after some bitter experiences as umpire during last year's league.

**SQUAD**

Khaled Mashud, Mushfiqur Rahman, Mustadir Litu, Aminul Islam (jr.), Rafiqul Islam, Anisur Rahman, Nuruzzaman, Tariqul Islam, Imran Parvez, Farid Hossain, Hasanuzzaman, Mahtab Anam, Alamgir Kabir, Faisal Khan, Jamal Faisal, Nadim, Mohammad Kalim, Tarib Ahmed, Abdullah-al Mamun, Murad Khan, Bidyut, Sohel, Rezwanel Islam.

## Eng can hold head high

**Cricket**

REUTERS, New Delhi

Eventually, it was victory in defeat for England in India.

Nasser Hussain's side lost a three-Test series in India 1-0, far from being drubbed 3-0 as predicted after the under-strength side bounced back from a 10-wicket defeat in the first game to dominate the next two drawn affairs.

As rain interruptions saw chances of a result recede fast in the final Bangalore Test before Sunday's final day was washed out, it was the hosts who looked relieved.

That scenario looked a remote possibility when the largely inexperienced England side landed last month with one suspicious eye on security and the other on the slow, turning Indian pitches.

With none in the England side having previously played Tests in India -- England were blanked 3-0 on their last four eight years ago -- they seemed ideal opposition for India to regain their home superiority after last month's Test series loss in South Africa.

But England batsmen quickly came to grips against spinners Anil Kumble and Harbhajan Singh, who had combined to claim 15 of the 20 wickets to set up the Mohali victory.

Skipper Hussain largely succeeded in his counter-attacking methods as the top-order responded well in the second Test in Ahmedabad despite Graham Thorpe, their most accomplished batsman, pulling out of the Test and tour due to personal problems.

And young pacemen Matthew Hoggard, 24, and Andrew Flintoff took over in the absence of first-choice Andy Caddick and Darren Gough, troubling the formidable

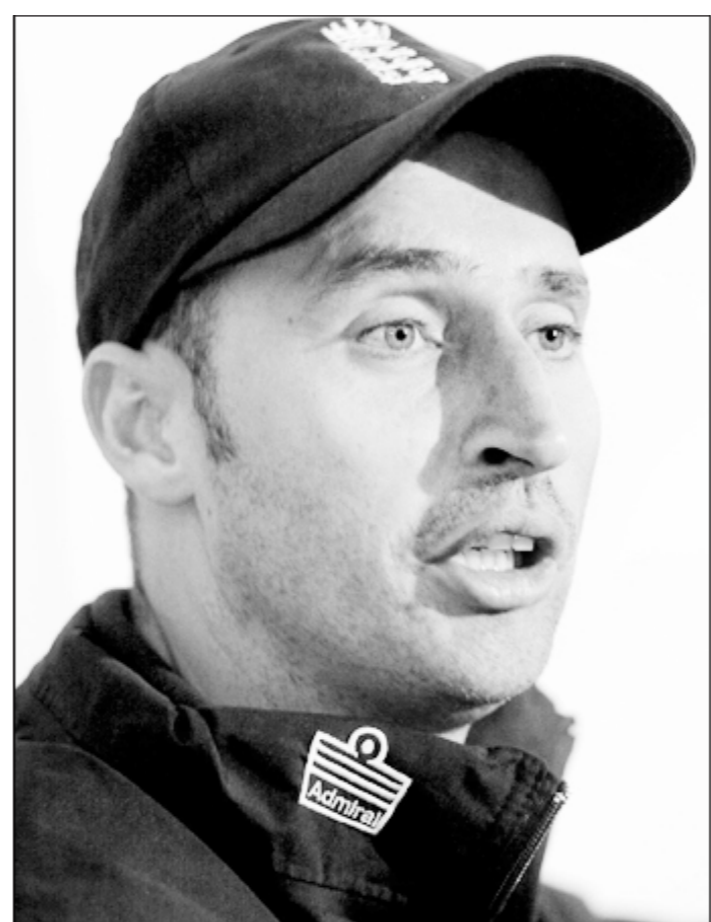
Indian batting with the prolific Sachin Tendulkar being the lone exception.

A day after the series ended, former stars praised England, who at one stage even raised hopes of repeating their surprise Test series

wins in Pakistan and Sri Lanka last winter.

"Nasser had limited resources at hand, but England played sensible cricket, rallied around each other and came back splendidly to very

SEE PAGE 15



England captain Nasser Hussain speaks to journalists during the post match press conference after the third and final Test against India in Bangalore on December 23.

## Jason out, Allan doubtful

**Cricket**

AFP, Melbourne

Australian fast bowler Jason Gillespie was ruled out of the second cricket Test with South Africa here on Wednesday with a shoulder injury.

Andy Bichel, who was named in a 12-man team for the Melbourne Cricket Ground Test, is expected to take Gillespie's place with West Australian speedster Brad Williams



JASON GILLESPIE

called into the 12-man squad late Monday.

Gillespie, whose career has been limited by various ailments from stress fractures to hamstring strains, was about to play his 17th consecutive Test this week.

But a nagging injury he picked up in the first Test in Adelaide developed into something more sinister at training Monday and he was ruled out of the match by team physiotherapist Errol Alcott.

Alcott said Gillespie first complained of a pain in his right shoulder on the fourth day's play in Adelaide.

"He responded to treatment over the past four or five days but checking him this morning I just don't think he had that endurance quality to keep putting in," Alcott said Monday.

Gillespie went for an MRI scan "to ascertain just what sort of damage there is in the right shoulder," Alcott said.

"We don't think it's going to be a long rehab process -- unlike some of the things he's had before."

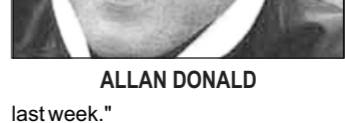
"It's something that's happened either during throwing or bowling

last week."

Alcott said it was unlikely Gillespie would recover in time for the third Test starting in Sydney on January 2, making it easier for the national selectors to call in Stuart MacGill.

Leg-spinner MacGill was a strong contender for the spin-friendly Sydney Test but Gillespie's injury means no one has to be dropped to make for MacGill.

Gillespie spent nearly a year on the sidelines after the 1997 Ashes series with stress fractures in his back.



ALLAN DONALD

Then on the tour of Sri Lanka in 1999 he broke his leg in an outfield collision with Steve Waugh.

Meanwhile, South African captain Shaun Pollock said no decision had been made on whether Allan Donald was fit to play the Test after the veteran fast bowler was again troubled by a foot injury in the drawn match against New South Wales.

He was suffering from a foot injury he sustained in Perth two weeks ago, South African captain Shaun Pollock said Sunday.

"He's still battling with his foot," said Protea captain Pollock.

Donald missed the first Test because he was under-prepared but the South Africans are keen to get him in the team.

Pollock was coy about Donald's prospects of forcing his way into the Boxing Day Test.

"It would have been nice if he came through pain-free," he said.

A decision will be made on Tuesday.

**AUSTRALIA SQUAD:** Steve Waugh (captain), Matthew Hayden, Justin Langer, Ricky Ponting, Mark Waugh, Damien Martyn, Adam Gilchrist, Brett Lee, Shane Warne, Glenn McGrath, Andrew Bichel, Brad Williams (12th man to be named).

**Pabna soccer**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Abhijan recorded an impressive 3-1 victory over Ishwardy Thana Kira Sangstha in the Randhuni Second Division Football League at the local stadium on Monday.

For the winners Munir, Zamil and Ana were the scorers while Masum pulled one back in favour of Ishwardy.



## Did U Know?

Glen McGrath of Australia is now the leader for a list of all bowlers who have dismissed a particular batsman 12 times or more. The lanky fast bowler dismissed England opener Mike Atherton 19 times so far.



## What to WATCH