

Soggy welcome for Zimbabwe

INTERNET, Birmingham

Zimbabwe received the dampest of welcomes to England...

By the close, the universities had made steady and unimpressive progress to 92 for 2...

Most of the interest in the game lay elsewhere, in the expected protests from the Stop the Tour campaign...

But, like the smattering of spectators, they were unenthusiastic by the conditions...

Warwickshire's chief executive Dennis Amis, who had instigated extensive security arrangements for the match...

On the field, the universities captain, Jimmy Adams, top-scored with an excellent 42...

Quit Hussain, says Gatting

AFP, London

England captain Nasser Hussain should immediately quit, said one of his predecessors Mike Gatting...

Gatting believed Hussain's pursuit of 100 Test caps was "self-centred" and insisted he should stand down as Test captain...

Hussain announced his intention to resign as one-day captain, a post likely to be occupied by Michael Vaughan...

Gatting wrote in his Observer column: "The England captain has always been pretty self-centred, but reading his Sunday newspaper column last week I want to play this many Tests..."

Jaffer shines

FROM PAGE 13 decision to bat first on a placid track.

But wickets kept tumbling at the other end, mainly due to lack of application from the batsmen...

Opener Vinayak Mane was the first to go for 13 when he fended a rising delivery from medium-pace Gokulakrishnan to the wicketkeeper.

Left-hander Nishid Shetty scored 21 in a 58-run stand for the second wicket with Jaffer before he was caught behind trying to drive a wishy delivery from Gokulakrishnan.

Jaffer, who raised his 50 off 87 balls with a couple to square-leg, was finally caught in the slips by Sadagopan Ramesh.

Former India spinner Saiyaj Bahutke (34) and all-rounder Ajit Agarkar (26) put on 53 for the sixth wicket to prop up the Bombay total...

Bombay have won the national Ranji Trophy 34 times, while Tamil Nadu have won it just twice.

SCORES

Bombay 259 for nine (Wasim Jaffer 83; S Suresh for 51) v Tamil Nadu.

Star WHIZZ KID COMPETITION 193. Tick the correct answers, post to The Daily Star. Win attractive prizes. Competition closes at 8 pm May 9, 2003 and draw shortly afterwards.

What happened to Lara?

Cricket

AFP, Bridgetown

Mystery surrounds the illness which has laid low West Indian super batsman Brian Lara in the third cricket Test against Australia here.

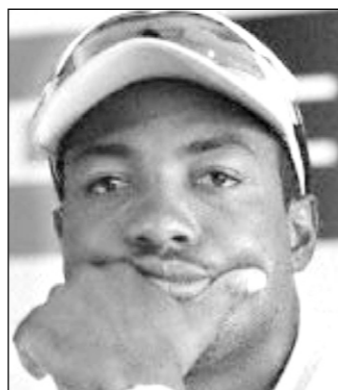
Lara left his sick bed on Saturday's third day and came in under the batting order at number eight to try and get the West Indies past the follow-on...

Lara laboured during his 80 minutes at the crease, but he and Windies team officials would not say what was wrong.

Team officials would not say whether the premier batsman might have contracted chicken pox, which kept teammate Jermaine Lawson out of the second Test.

Lara, who celebrated his 34th birthday on Friday, arrived at Kensington Oval after tea and left without explanation about his condition.

"You've got to go to the team manager. I batted today and I will bat in the second innings," Lara said.



BRIAN LARA said late Saturday.

But team manager Ricky Skerritt added to the general confusion when he said: "I'm not the team doctor. I'm not going to talk about Lara."

A team spokesman said Lara's health would be assessed again during Sunday's fourth day.

The latest setback continues Lara's recent health problems. He contracted hepatitis late last year, which forced him out of the tour to India last October and out of international cricket for four months.

Lara was hospitalised after scoring a century during the Champions Trophy in Sri Lanka last September and he did not play for the Windies again until February's World Cup.

Lara's situation is critical to the West Indies' attempts to prevent a first-ever series whitewash in 73 years' cricket in the Caribbean.

He will have only a few days to recover before Friday's fourth and final Test in Antigua.

Lara has been the Caribbean's great batting hope with centuries in the opening two Tests of the series against the powerful Australian bowling attack in Guyana and Trinidad.

Beware boycotters

Cricket

REUTERS, Bridgetown

Countries boycotting World Cup matches may be kicked out of the tournament in future, International Cricket Council (ICC) chief executive Malcolm Speed said on Saturday.

This year's tournament was thrown into chaos when England and New Zealand refused to play first-round group matches in Zimbabwe and Kenya.

The ICC will also decide this year whether to change the format of the competition and reduce the number of teams taking part after complaints that the 2003 World Cup in South Africa was too long.

Speed said the World Cup's credibility was damaged by England's refusal to play a match in Harare and New Zealand pulled out of a game in Nairobi. Both teams forfeited points but continued in the tournament.

"It had a very negative impact that the two matches were boycotted," Speed told a news conference after a meeting with West Indies Cricket Board (WIBC) officials about the 2007 World Cup.

"We don't have a solution at the moment, we have four years to find a solution," he added.

He said that in future, he wanted the ICC to make teams sign an undertaking to fulfil all their World Cup fixtures.

"What we would like is that...once teams have agreed to play the World Cup, they are bound to play in each World Cup match, and that we require them to honour that undertaking or they will leave the World Cup," he said.

The issue of the number of teams and format will be discussed by the ICC in London next month after criticism that the 14 sides taking part in South Africa was too many.

"We are looking at all the options," Speed said. "Maybe we go back to 12 teams, maybe we stay with 14 or maybe we extend to 16."

"There are seven or eight options we are looking at. In some there might 54 be games, the lowest number of games is 39."

Speed, however, rejected suggestions that this year's tournament had been too long.

"There were some criticisms that it was too drawn out, but we heard that mainly from English journalists once their team went home, it became a bit long and drawn out for them," he said.

"I didn't hear any complaints from India or New Zealand or South Africa, they were enjoying every minute of it."

Speed added that security had been greatly increased in South Africa after a number of end-of-match pitch invasions marred the 1999 World Cup in England.

"In South Africa, we did not have a single incident of an unauthorised person coming on to the pitch in the 52 matches and we would expect that level of security in West Indies in 2007," he said.

Both sides retained the same team for the decisive Test of the short two-match series.

This is not the first time the Asgiriya stadium has seen cricket drastically hit by bad weather.

During India's Test match here in 1993, only 45 minutes play was possible on the first day before the rest of the match was rained off.

Scoreboard at stumps on the second day of the second and final cricket Test between Sri Lanka and New Zealand at the Asgiriya stadium here on Sunday:

NEW ZEALAND: First innings Richardson not out 32; Horne c Kaluwatharana b Vaas 1; Fleming lbw b Vaas 0; Sinclair lbw b Vaas 3; Styris c Tillakaratne b M'tharan 32; Oram not out 0; Extras: (b-2, lb-2, nb-3) 7; Total: (For 4 wickets in 34 overs) 75

To bat: Hart, Tuffey, Vettori, Wiseman, Bond

Bowler O M R W Vaas 10 5 19 2 Nissanka 7 2 16 1 M'tharan 9 2 18 1 Jayasuriya 3 0 7 0 D'sena 4 1 11 0 L'rachchi 1 1 0 0

SRI LANKA: Tillakaratne, Jayasuriya, Atapattu, Sangakkara, Jayawardena, Kaluwatharana, Muralitharan, Dharmasena, Lokuarachchi, Vaas, Nissanka. Toss: New Zealand. Umpires: Daryl Harper (Australia)

decaying cricket grounds up to scratch.

"With 14 countries, we are undertaking something which is inherently difficult," said Speed.

"But we are not interested in taking the easy option if that were the case, we would go to England or Australia. There are many positive things in being able to come to these islands. We know there will be difficulties but are confident the people here can cope with that."

"I'm very confident that the West Indies Cricket Board will be able to deliver an excellent World Cup."

"West Indies is well and truly on track to deliver the ICC World Cup in 2007, there has been a good deal of planning and a good deal of strategic thought."

"It gives us the opportunity to be different from other World Cups and different from other sports. No other sport could have an event like this in the Caribbean."

Dehring said that cruise ships and charter flights were being considered to move players and supporters around the region during the tournament.

Matches would put up for

'Unforgettable' WC vowed

Cricket

REUTERS, Bridgetown

West Indies dismissed concerns on Saturday about their ability to host the 2007 cricket World Cup and promised to stage an "unforgettable" event.

West Indian and International Cricket Council (ICC) officials also guaranteed that all major matches would take place in the Caribbean, although some early games could be held in the United States or Canada.

"We are confident we will be able to deliver the kind of event the world is expecting from the Caribbean," said Chris Dehring, managing director of the 2007 World Cup organising committee.

"It's a unique opportunity to put on a World Cup the world will never forget."

ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed said holding the event in the West Indies, which consists of 14 different nations, would be a huge challenge.

Dehring added that meticulous planning would be needed to ferry thousands of cricket fans around the region and bring the often

tender and would be staged by the country which came up with the most attractive offer.

"It's going to be very competitive for countries to come up to scratch to bid for matches," he said.

"There's going to be a very open tender process which will allow countries to bid for matches and special events, such as the opening ceremony."

"We hope to start a tender process by the latter half of this year."

He said the challenges were enormous.

"We have around 40,000 rooms in the English-speaking Caribbean and this will probably not satisfy the demand for a single match between England and India," he said.

"We have made an absolute policy that the semi-finals and finals will be played in the countries of the WIBC."

Speed added: "This is a West Indies World Cup and it will be played in the Caribbean. There's a possibility of a small number of matches in the United States or Canada, that decision will be made later this year."

Scoreboard at close of play on the third day of the third Test between West Indies and Australia at Kensington Oval on Saturday:

AUSTRALIA: First innings 605 for 9 declared (S Waugh 115, R Ponting 113, D Lehmann 96; J Lawson 3-113, O Banks 3-204)

WEST INDIES: First innings (overnight 89-0) Gayle b Gillespie 71; Smith c Gilchrist b Gillespie 59; Ganga c Bichel b Lehmann 26; Sarwan c Gilchrist b Lee 40; Chanderpaul c Lee b MacGill 0; Banks c Ponting b Gillespie 24; Ganga c Ponting b MacGill 24; Lara lbw b Bichel 14; Drakes not out 4; Extras: (b-6, lb-12, nb-11) 29; Total: (For 8 wickets in 112.2 overs) 291

Fall of wickets: 1-139, 2-142, 3-205, 4-206, 5-245, 6-245, 7-281, 8-291

To bat: Best, Lawson

Bowler O M R W McGrath 18 7 25 0 Gillespie 21 9 31 3 Lee 20 6 68 1 MacGill 31.2 3 95 2 Lehmann 9 2 26 1 Bichel 13 2 28 1

Lara was struck down just a week after fast bowler Jermaine Lawson was forced out of the second Test in Port of Spain last week with chicken pox.

Gillespie claimed the wickets of opening batsmen Chris Gayle and Devon Smith in six balls in the morning session.

Gayle glad

REUTERS, Bridgetown

West Indies opener Chris Gayle, left out of the first two Tests against Australia because of confusion over eligibility rules, said on Saturday he was glad to be back and that he had found new motivation in his absence.

Gayle made 71 in his return as he shared a first-wicket partnership of 139 with Devon Smith in the second Test against Australia.

"I'm not out to prove anything, all I want is to play cricket for the West Indies and represent the team," he said.

"When I was dropped, I used to set myself some targets in these two Test matches," he said.

"I really trained hard and so far I'm pleased with myself."

The Jamaican was overlooked for the first Test after not making himself available for a domestic final against Barbados, which the West Indies Cricket Board (WIBC) said broke its eligibility rules.

Magura cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Bhithashayer Kriya Chakra defeated Patriot Sporting Club by 71 runs in the Econo Cricket League at the Magura Stadium yesterday.

Winning the toss, Bhithashayer decided to bat first and scored 179 runs all out in 34.3 overs.

In reply, Patriot were all out for 108 in 27.5 overs.

SCORES IN BRIEF BHITHASHAYER KRIRA CHAKRA: 179 all out in 34.3 overs (Imran 35, Sabuj 31, Munna 20; Nazmul 4/31, Rajib 2/24, Firoz 2/43).

PATRIOT SPORTING CLUB: 108 all out in 27.5 overs (Miraz 25, Sumon 18, Mahub 10; Abid 4/18, Milton 4/33, Sumon 1/13).

Result: Bhithashayer Kriya Chakra won by 71 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Milton Today's match: Surjatarun Sporting Club Vs Udayan Sporting Club.

Lanka gain

FROM PAGE 13

The first Test at the Tamil Union ground in Colombo ended in a high-scoring draw last Tuesday as the bat dominated the ball on an easy-paced wicket that held no terror for the batsmen.

Both sides retained the same team for the decisive Test of the short two-match series.

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IT MEANS A LOT: South African players Makhaya Ntini (2nd from L) and debutant Robin Peterson take a look at the GrameenPhone Test series trophy while captain Graeme Smith (R) grimaces during the presentation ceremony at the end of the second and final Test yesterday.

Shoaib on crucial tour

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan's young cricketers set off for Sri Lanka Sunday to compete in a tri-nation one-day tournament that could make or break pacer Shoaib Akhtar.

Dubbed the "Rawalpindi Express", Shoaib's career derailed after Pakistan's first-round World Cup exit in March.

To add further humiliation, the Pakistan cricket chief warned that the Sri Lanka tour could be Shoaib's last if he didn't pull up his socks.

"The Sri Lanka tour could be a turning point in Shoaib's career. He is a match winner but it is up to him how he goes about his cricket now and how much importance he lays on his role as a key figure," captain Rashid Latif said.

The 27-year-old pacer, who twice achieved the honour of breaking the 100mph (160 kmh) barrier with his deliveries, was dogged by bowling controversies, vulnerability to injury and discipline problems.

"Shoaib is his own worst enemy and this is his last chance to revive his career," Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Lieutenant General

Tauqir Zia warned last week. Shoaib's bowling action was questioned on three occasions and he was twice suspended on disciplinary grounds.

With 88 wickets in 25 Tests and 133 in 81 one-day internationals, Shoaib is Pakistan's frontline pacer.

Pakistan's revamped team under Latif as captain and Javed Miandad as coach won a quadrangular tournament in Sharjah last month.

"The Sharjah win was a big morale booster for the new team but the tri-series in Sri Lanka would be a bigger test as the opposition is stronger," the Pakistan captain said.

Hosts Sri Lanka and New Zealand also feature in the May 10-23 one-day tournament.

Pakistan has two uncapped players in 25-year-old middle order batsman Yasir Hameed, who can also bowl leg-spin, and 28-year-old opener Faisal Athar.

SQUAD Rashid Latif (captain), Yousuf Youhana (Vice captain), Mohammad Hafeez, Taufiq Umar, Faisal Iqbal, Younis Khan, Shoaib Malik, Yasir Hameed, Faisal Athar, Abdul Razzaq, Shabbir Ahmed, Shoaib Akhtar, Mohammad Sami, Umer Gul and Danish Kaneria.

Coach: Javed Miandad. Manager: Haroon Rasheed.

Shoaib will be forbidden from making statements and will have to let his performance do the talking.

"This tour is the first stage of Shoaib's comeback and we would like him to keep a low profile and save his energy for the England

tour next month," Latif said.

Shoaib is the only one of eight senior players dumped after Pakistan's humiliating first-round exit from the World Cup earlier this year to win a recall.

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Indo-Pak play not soon?

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

Bilateral cricket ties between India and Pakistan are unlikely to be resumed this year despite "positive signals" from the Indian government, reports said Sunday.

"Dates seem to be a problem now both for the Asia Cup as well as the revival of bilateral cricketing relations," Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) president Jagmohan Dalmiya said.

Dalmiya met Saturday his Pakistani counterpart Tauqir Zia at an Asian Cricket Foundation meeting in Dubai to resolve the impasse arising out of the Indian government's refusal to sanction bilateral matches with its neighbour.

"It was a beginning, what with our government also indicating that they are keen to resume bilateral sporting ties. However, we were in no position to commit anything," Dalmiya told the Times of India newspaper.

The meeting failed to find a slot for the Asia Cup before next

February, the paper said.

Dalmiya said the revival of bilateral ties between the two countries would take some time despite the positive signals from the Indian government.

"It may take until early next year because of many reasons. Many of our cricketers are injured, while we have also allowed some of our players to play county cricket in England," he said.

The Indian board had urged Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee in a letter before the Dubai meeting to use his office to favourably consider its request to resume bilateral matches with Pakistan to avoid international isolation.

The letter was handed over to the prime minister a couple of days ago by board official and MP Rajiv Shukla and was under consideration, the Press Trust of India news agency said.

"If India does not play Pakistan, the equilibrium of world cricket will be severely affected because the World Championship cannot be decided. India may be totally isolated in world cricket," the letter said.

The government has yet to announce its decision.

Pakistan last month pulled out of the Asia Cup in Sri Lanka after the Indian government refused its team permission to play a scheduled Test series in Pakistan in protest at Islamabad's alleged support of militancy in Kashmir.

The Indian team, however, is allowed to play Pakistan in multi-nation events, like the World Cup and Asia Cup. The two sides met in the recent World Cup in South Africa in March.

India have not played a Test match in Pakistan since 1989, while Pakistan played three Tests in India in 1999-2000 despite threats from Hindu fundamentalists.

The BCCI has already proposed resuming bilateral tours at neutral venues but said it was willing to abide by the government policy.

"The board fully appreciated and honoured the government's stand in this respect. But the BCCI, being a member of the world cricket parent body the International Cricket Council (ICC), it is now in a rather embarrassing position," the letter said.

Aussies dictate terms

FROM PAGE 13

Ganga, who scored centuries in the first two Tests in the series, fell to a full toss by spinner Darren Lehmann in the 77th over.

He spooned an easy catch to Bichel at mid-on and was out for 26, eked out in 130 minutes off 89 balls with two fours.

That ended a stubborn 63-run stand for the third wicket with vice-captain Ramnaresh Sarwan.

Chanderpaul, who clubbed a 69-ball century in the first Test, only to last one ball before he was out to a ranked long-hop from MacGill.

He top-edged an attempted pull shot down the ground to Brett Lee who took a two-handed tumbling catch to dismiss him for a duck and leave the Windies 206 for four.

After tea, Sarwan edged a Lee outswinger to wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist for 40 and Test debutant Oram Banks found Ponting at second slip off Gillespie for a bright 24 off 40 balls opening the way for Lara's arrival at the crease.

Lara was struck down just a week after fast bowler Jermaine Lawson was forced out of the second Test in Port of Spain last week with chicken pox.

Gillespie claimed the wickets of opening batsmen Chris Gayle and Devon Smith in six balls in the morning session.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues: ACROSS 1 Compelnet art, 5 Galena, e.g., 8 Dimwit, 12 Pull an all-nighter, 13 Bando of baseball lore, 14 Italian island, 15 Needle's hideout?, 17 Settled down, 18 Absolutely, 19 Tiny Tim played it, 20 Estival pests, 21 Shape shifter?, 22 "So Fine", 23 Foreigner, 26 Guatemalan money, 30 Painter Magritte, 31 Prize-fighter, 32 "in - horse open sleigh", 33 Have no effect, 35 Rorschach character, 36 Firmament, 37 Albanian money, 38 Paratrooper's need, 41 Reason to say "alas", 42 "O Sole -", 45 Golf target, 46 Video game control, 48 - Nicolo Smith, 49 Eggs, 50 Cupid's forte, 51 Summit, 52 Solidify, 53 Lawless, 20 "Holy cow!", 21 Tomato variety, 22 Embrace, 23 Branch, 24 Floral neckwear, 25 Illegal aliens' foe (Abb.), 26 "Sera, Sera", 27 Menagerie, 28 Pismire, 29 "Mis-erables", 31 Snooch, 34 Man with an alibi, 35 Apiary