

Ivy hits fifth NZ-SA ODI

BBC ONLINE, undated

The fifth one-day international between New Zealand and South Africa in Auckland has been postponed because of rain brought by a tropical cyclone Ivy.

The match could yet be played on Sunday the reserve day although the forecast is for more poor weather.

If the rescheduled match is unable to go ahead, the Black Caps will earn their first ever series win over the touring South Africans.

They hold an unassailable 3-1 lead in the six-game series.

The series has been dogged by bad weather, with the fourth game in Dunedin postponed for 24 hours.

And the final game is due to be played in Napier on Tuesday, in which South Africa captain Graeme Smith insisted his team could bounce back.

He said: "New Zealand have played excellent cricket.

"But we know we can perform a lot better and maybe that's the biggest difference at this stage."

The series has been hit by poor ticket sales, which New Zealand Cricket chief executive Martin Snedden admitted had been due to the weather.

Mobil-CAS Cup golf held

ISPR, Comilla

Brigadier General Md Ashhab Uddin became men's champion while Luna Sarker picked up the ladies' title of the Mobil-CAS Cup Golf Tournament that was held at the Maynamati Golf and Country Club in Comilla Cantonment on Friday.

A total of 145 golfers, including nine lady players and 12 juniors from the Kurmitola, Army Golf Club, Bhatiyari, Savar and Maynamati took part in the competition.

Later president of Bangladesh Golf Federation and Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury gave away trophies among the winners.

Managing director of Mobil Bangladesh Limited Azam J Chowdhury was present on the occasion.

OTHER RESULTS

Men's first runner-up: Brig Gen Lodi, Ladies' runner-up: Yusuf , Men's second runner-up: Lt Col Nasim, Nearest to the Pin: Akteruzzaman and Longest drive: Maj Iqbal.

Sachin then, Sachin now

REUTERS, New Delhi



Tendulkar.

Then a curly-haired 16-year-old, who made his debut as a lower middle-order batsman and scored 215 runs in six innings, Tendulkar is now widely regarded as the best batsman of this generation.

He is the only player still active from that Pakistan tour of 1989-90 while the Indian team has finally evolved around him into a force to be reckoned with.

Rahul Dravid has hit a good spell, captain Sourav Ganguly's gutsy doggedness has energised the side, Vangipurappu Laxman's silken touch is at its best and leg-spinner Anil Kumble has discovered what it takes to grab wickets overseas.

But none of them know first-hand what an Indian tour of Pakistan entails. They have only heard about the fierce pressure created when a tense away Test series is blended with volatile fans, lurking security fears and strong political overtones.

Tendulkar has been there, has felt it.

He is the man India will rely on, more than ever, to guide them to victory in their historic three-Test series starting on March 10.

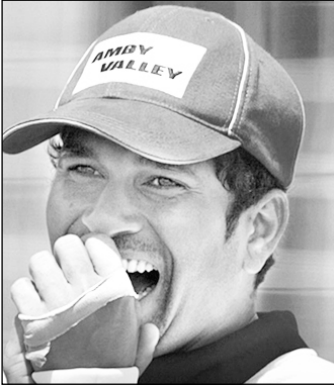
But the 30-year-old from Bombay will have to exorcise his own demons against Pakistan.

In 1999, the last time the two teams played a Test series, India

were chasing 271 for victory in the first Test at Madras. Tendulkar slammed a masterly 136 but his dismissal 17 runs short of the target led to India crumbling to an ignominious defeat.

Two Tests later in Calcutta, he was bowled by Shoaib Akhtar for a first-ball duck with an unplayable yorker that set the tone for another Pakistan victory.

Tendulkar redeemed himself somewhat with a blistering match-



SACHIN TENDULKAR

winning 98 at the 2003 World Cup in South Africa, including a six over third-man off Akhtar that is regarded as one of the most memorable shots of the tournament.

But a defining match-winning Test innings still eludes him.

"I have been disappointed with myself...I have to learn to finish Tests," he admitted two years ago.

Tendulkar is conscious of his place in cricket history and would not like to end his career with doubts lingering over his ability to win matches.

For the first time in his career, he has the support cast needed to guide India to an overseas Test series win, which would be their first since they beat Sri Lanka 10 years ago.

They came close in Australia earlier this year, with Tendulkar leading the charge in the final Sydney Test with a career-best 241, but could not put the finishing touches to what would have been a remarkable triumph.

Tendulkar is not alone any more because India have discovered a batting line-up that can match any in the world.

Opener Virender Sehwag is relentless in attack, not only scoring runs quickly but also crushing the morale of the bowling side with his audacity.

Partner Aakash Chopra was worth his weight in gold in Australia, bravely fending off quick bowlers on pacy wickets even if his series average of 23 was a tad low.

The foursome who follow Dravid, Tendulkar, Ganguly and Laxman have reached a level of consistency that has forced even their fiercest critics to marvel at them.

But Pakistan have the explosive Akhtar, regarded as the world's fastest bowler and at the peak of his powers now.

India suffer in the bowling department with Kumble and left-arm pacesman Zaheer Khan still recovering from injuries. Their batsmen will have to bear the burden.

Once the tensions and pressures of the Pakistan series start taking their toll, all eyes will be on Tendulkar as Indian fans wait with bated breath for him to take control.

Hailing Kasprowicz



REUTERS, Colombo

Australian captain Ricky Ponting praised fast bowler Michael Kasprowicz after his match-winning performance against Sri Lanka helped the visitors to a 40-run victory in the fourth one-day international on Friday.

Kasprowicz snapped up career-best figures of five for 45 to bowl Sri Lanka out for 193, and helped Australia clinch an unassailable 3-1 lead in the five-match series.

"It's fantastic that he has got another chance to play for Australia and in the last couple of games he has bowled beautifully," said Ponting.

"He has been bowling well for a long time. You ask anyone in domestic cricket back home who the pick of the bowlers are and they will say him all the time.

"I think he is more consistent now and he knows that if he bowls how he wants to bowl he is giving himself the best chance to do well."

Ponting also hailed the spirit of his side, which pulled themselves back after Kumar Sangakkara had threatened to steal the game with a scintillating 101 before the home side lost their last eight wickets for just 50 runs.

"That was a fantastic win as we were behind the eight-ball in the field," said Ponting.

"I said to the guys when we went out there that the side that hangs in there the longest will probably win.

"When you are chasing a reasonable total, no matter how well you are going, it only takes one wicket to change things."

Kasprowicz, who was recalled to the one-day side last November after an almost five-year absence, said he was pleased to be back.

"I have bowled better in domestic cricket but certainly not for Australia in one day cricket," said Kasprowicz.

"It would be a lie to say it didn't cross my mind [not playing again for Australia], but you have just got to keep believing you are doing the right things.

"I think I have been improving, especially over the past couple of years, and that made me confident that I would get another crack if I stuck with it."

Naik heroics can't stop Pakistan

AFP, Sheikhupura

A brilliant 194 by Indian blind team batsman Shekhar Naik failed to stop Pakistan win by five wickets and take an unassailable 3-1 lead in the series here Friday.

Naik hit 25 boundaries and a six in his 194 to carry the Indian blind team to 359-5 in their 40 overs.

But Pakistan reached the target in 35.5 overs for the loss of just five wickets, with Mohammad Fayyaz hitting 101 his second century of the series.

Fayyaz hit eleven boundaries and was ably assisted by Mohammad Waqas (62) and Mohammad Shahbaz, who made 46.

Pakistan won the first two matches in Lahore and Karachi, while India came back to win the third match, also held in southern port city of Karachi.

The final match of the series will be played in the garrison city of Rawalpindi, next to the capital Islamabad, on Sunday.

India's blind cricket team is on its maiden foreign tour and is also playing a series against arch-rivals Pakistan for the first time.

PCB boss

FROM PAGE 13

Shaharyar said his board expected a revenue of 80 to 100 million rupees (1.73 million dollars) from ticket sales, but added: "I am disappointed we don't have large stadiums like India and considering the rapid sale of tickets I fear many fans would have to watch the series on television."

The PCB launched ticket sales on the Internet on Tuesday, while it is hoping to sell tickets at the stadium a week before each match.

Indians will arrive in Lahore on March 10 and play a warm up one-day game the following day before the start of the one-day series with a match in Karachi on March 13.

The remaining one-day matches will be played in Rawalpindi (March 16), Peshawar (March 19) and Lahore (March 21 and 23).

The Test matches will be played in Multan, Lahore and Rawalpindi.

BCCI names tour officials, but no bowling coach

AFP, New Delhi

India on Saturday named Ratnakar Shetty as the national cricket team's manager and Amrit Mathur as its media officer for next month's tour of Pakistan, but declined to send a bowling coach.

Indian captain Sourav Ganguly had told reporters on Thursday that a bowling coach would definitely accompany the team, leading to speculation that retired Indian pace spearhead Javagal Srinath would be given the job.

But Jagmohan Dalmiya, president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), said on Saturday he had not received any request from either Ganguly or chief coach John Wright about hiring a bowling specialist.

Former Australian left-arm-er Bruce Reid had served as the Indian team's bowling coach on the recent tour of Australia, and Srinath was expected to take over for Pakistan.

Shetty, who is the BCCI's joint secretary, and Mathur were part of the three-man Indian delegation that visited Pakistan earlier this month to study security and players' arrangements at various venues.

It was on the recommendation of the third member of the delegation, government security expert Yashovardhan Azad, that India declined to play Test matches in Karachi and Peshawar during the 40-day tour.

India will play five one-day internationals, followed by three Tests, from March 10 to April 17 on their first full tour of Pakistan since 1989.

The Indian team, which will be selected on Monday, will undergo a three-day conditioning camp in the eastern metropolis of Calcutta from March 7 to 9, Dalmiya said.

The team will depart for Lahore from New Delhi by a special Indian Airlines flight on March 10.

Dalmiya dismissed media reports that the Indian board would abandon the tour at the first sign of trouble in Pakistan.

Hasselbaink wants straight answers

AFP, London

Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink does not want to leave Chelsea and has called on club owner Roman Abramovich to tell the players just what he plans to do with manager Claudio Ranieri.

The former Atletico Madrid and Leeds United striker has been in and out of Ranieri's team this season, and was omitted from their recent games against Arsenal and Stuttgart.

But Hasselbaink, brought to Leeds in 1997 by then boss George Graham, is not looking to depart Stamford Bridge.

"It would be a pity if I have to leave because this is a magnificent club and I love it here," said Hasselbaink to the Sun.

"I adore English football and I am not looking to get a move. But if the club want me to go, I will have no say in it and hopefully another door would open for me."

But the Dutch striker has asked the club to end the rumours Ranieri will be axed at the end of the season.

The Italian's job has been reportedly insecure since Abramovich assumed control of Chelsea and Hasselbaink feels the players will benefit from knowing the club's long-term plans.

"There has been a lot of talk about everything at Chelsea, the boss and the players. It has been like this the whole season," he added.

"Maybe it would be helpful if the club told us what is going on. That would make it easier for the manager - not that he looks under pressure when he talks to us.

Bye bye golden goals



AFP, London

World football's rule-making International Board decided Saturday to abolish the use of the golden or silver goal rules to settle drawn matches in favour of a return to the classic formula of extra-time followed by penalties from next season.

The Board also decided that national teams will be allowed to make no more than six substitutions in friendlies.

The new rules for deciding drawn matches will not come into force in time for the Euro 2004 championships in Portugal this summer but it will mean changes for knockout matches in the Champions League next season.

Euro 2000 was decided by David Trezeguet's golden goal for France in extra-time against Italy. Under the golden goal system,

play stops immediately if a team scores in extra-time.

Under the silver goal system, now used in the Champions League, UEFA Cup and European Championships, if a team scores play continues until the end of that period of extra time giving the opposing team a chance to come back.

The move on substitutes was instigated by FIFA's powerful president, Sepp Blatter, who has been highly critical of managers making wholesale changes to their line-ups, arguing that this makes a farce of international matches.

Blatter had initially proposed a limit of five subs but was forced to compromise in view of opposition from coaches including England's Sven-Goran Eriksson who wanted to continue without any limits.

In a friendly against Portugal earlier this month, Eriksson made nine substitutions but still found himself outdone by his opposite

number Luis Felipe Scolari, who changed every one of his side's outfield players during the 1-1 draw in Faro.

The International Board which approved the rule changes is made up of the representatives from the four British football associations and four from FIFA. Proposals need the backing of six of the eight members of the committee to be adopted.

The Board also agreed to introduce automatic bookings for players who rip off their shirts in goal celebrations but rejected a proposal to increase the half-time break from 15 to 20 minutes.

The latter move, put forward by the German FA, was aimed at allowing more time for the sale of drinks and food inside stadia as well as for television advertising.

Batigol's Olympic wish



REUTERS, Buenos Aires

Argentina's record goal scorer Gabriel Batistuta hopes to be named in his country's soccer team for the Athens Olympic Games.

"It would be a dream to play in the national team (in Greece) but I'd need to get invited by the coach," Batistuta told an Argentine radio station.

"I'm in good shape after an ankle injury and I'd like to come back," he said speaking from Italy on Thursday.

"But I would not take this lightly, I'd have to see how I feel at that moment," added Batistuta, who quit international football after Argentina's upset first-round elimination in his third World Cup in Japan in 2002.

Argentina coach Marcelo Bielsa, also in charge of the Olympic side, has hinted that he could include Batistuta as an over-age player in the Athens Games in August.

The 35-year-old Batistuta, who spent most of his career in Italy with Fiorentina, AS Roma and Inter Milan, has been playing this season for Al-Arabi in Qatar.

"I'm enjoying my football



GABRIEL BATISTUTA

because (in Qatar) there isn't the pressure or violence that there is on the pitches of other countries," he said.

Batistuta, who scored 56 goals in 78 internationals, said he would like to end his playing days back at Fiorentina even if they were in Serie B.

Fergie for calm



AFP, London

Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson has pleaded with fans to drop plans to protest against Irish shareholders John Magnier and JP McManus on Gold Cup day at next month's Cheltenham Festival.

In a statement, Ferguson said he did not want the famous race meeting disrupted as a result of his feud with Magnier over stud rights to the champion racehorse Rock of Gibraltar.

"The Cheltenham Festival is a classic meeting in the National Hunt racing calendar, which people from all over the world and all walks of life come to enjoy," Ferguson said.

"It is effectively the equivalent to the FA Cup final to horseracing fans and I would not wish this special festival to be marred in any way."

Ferguson's appeal came two days after Cheltenham organisers agreed that fans group United4Action could stage a protest

warning Magnier and McManus not to mount a takeover bid for the club.

Edward Gillespie, Cheltenham's managing director, welcomed Ferguson's appeal. "Hopefully this will make it very unlikely that anyone



ALEX FERGUSON

will protest and hopefully this will bring the matter to an end," he said.

Magnier and McManus's investment company, Cubic Expression, owns 28.89 percent of the shares in the English Premiership champi-

ons, just under the threshold which would trigger an automatic takeover bid.

The Irish duo have put pressure on the United board in recent weeks by raising questions about Ferguson's transfer dealings, payments to agents and the involvement of the manager's son, Jason.

Their action has been widely interpreted as being linked to the ongoing legal dispute between Magnier and Ferguson over Rock of Gibraltar's stud rights and some fans fear a takeover by the Irish duo could lead to the Scot being ousted as manager.

The dispute between Magnier and Ferguson has its roots in 2001, when the racing tycoon gave the Scottish manager joint ownership of the horse as a gift.

Ferguson believes this should also entitle him to a half share of stud fees which could be worth up to 200 million pounds (373 million dollars) and is suing Magnier.

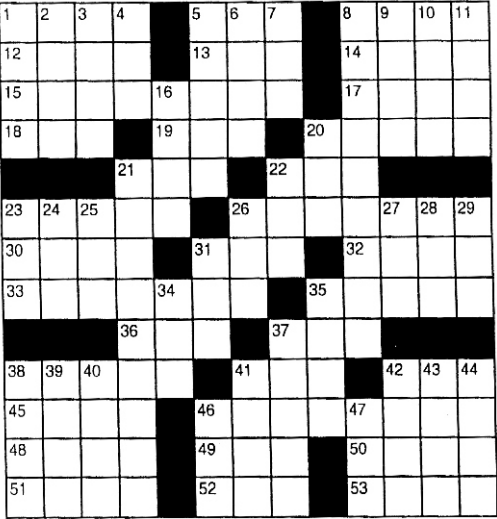
Chief of Army Staff and president of Kurmitola Golf Club Lt General Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury is seen with the winners of the Mobil-CAS Cup golf tournament at the Maynamati Golf and Country Club, Comilla Cantonment on February 27.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 "Fargo" actor
5 Retiring channel
8 In such a manner
12 Field parcel
13 Itty-bitty
14 Symbol of Ireland
15 Stage star
17 "— quam videri" (N.C. motto)
18 Chop
19 Tackle's teammate
20 "Poppy-cock"
21 Play-ground game
22 Royal insomnia cause
23 Skirmish
26 Habitue
30 Wile E.'s supplier
31 Nail with a ray gun
32 React to yeast
33 The Beatles, e.g.
35 Betrayer
36 A villain

37 Clear the tables
38 Elevator channel
41 Anti-quated
42 Be a 15-Across
45 Jam-ingredient?
46 Speculate
48 Composer
49 North Sea feeder
50 Algal flier
51 Nitwit
52 Fool
53 Polar explorer
DOWN
1 Numbers racket?
2 Longing
3 Staff
4 "Abso-lutely"
5 Play-ground favorite
6 Be in charge of
7 Longing
8 Roget's compilation
9 Heavenly — ice cream
10 Bear in the air
11 Gush forth
16 Moss material
20 Cribbage scorer
21 So
22 Energy
23 Common Web abbr.
24 Hosp. section
25 "Today Show"
26 Snitch
27 Cover
28 Simile
29 Scale center
31 Buddhist notes
32 Fan of Barney, probably
35 Martial art
37 Consecrate
38 Put into words
39 "Les Miser-ables" author
40 On
41 Resistance units
42 Ethereal
43 Despot
44 Take care of
46 Earl Grey, e.g.
47 Plagiarize

Solution time: 21 mins.



CRYPTOQUIP

UZY FAPVF ZVLQ CVFAR

SLFF RYDYQ EADY UA V

RY S H F V P Y . L U ' C V

HYQEVRYRU FAPVULAR.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: MANY PEOPLE CONSIDER VITAMIN C A VERY USEFUL WEAPON FOR FIGHTING THE COLD WAR.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: F equals L

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.